



Royal Mail

Electronic pre-advice data Frequently asked questions for customers

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Electronic data requirement

In June we informed customers that we will be updating our Terms and Conditions for posting parcels overseas. From 1 January 2019, you will be required to provide electronic pre-advice data about the sender, the recipient and the items you are posting. We need you to provide this data in the correct format to meet these new requirements and ensure continued shipping of overseas parcels without restriction.

This is to ensure that legislative, security and customs requirements in the receiving countries are met. Some countries including the US, China, Russia and Brazil apply penalties or delay items in the absence of the required data. For example the United States has gone as far as legislating to mandate that inbound shipments be accompanied by electronic pre-advice by the end of 2018. They have said they will reserve the right to refuse items without it.

What are the benefits?

Providing electronic pre-advice will

- allow you to be ready for and comply with legislative changes and individual country requirements
- avoid delays and penalty charges
- enable an easier and slicker customs clearance and import process for recipients
- allow you to get access to export delivery features such as notifications and delivery choice

Furthermore, the deadline for implementation of the (European) Union Customs Code, which includes legislation requiring electronic pre-advice data, is at the end of 2020.

FAQs

What is electronic pre-advice?

Electronic pre-advice is information you provide electronically about the sender, the recipient and the contents of the items that you post overseas. It includes information required for overseas Customs as well as recipient contact information to enable free parcel notifications for your customer and help overseas Postal services to contact them in case of problems with their parcel.

What is already required

- Information provided in customs forms CN 22 and CN 23 for items sent outside of the EU, incl.
 - Sender details (name, address, telephone number and email)
 - recipient details (name, address including destination country)
 - Item details (description, quantity, weight and value of contents being sent abroad)
 - Harmonised System (HS) Trade Tariff code and country of origin of contents
 - Postage and insurance costs
- A 2D barcode and a UPU compliant S10 barcode for tracked export goods

What's new

- Information about the sender, the recipient and the goods being sent abroad incl. HS code must now be provided electronically
- A Universal Postal Union (UPU) compliant S10 barcode is required on untracked export goods so items can be linked to the electronic pre-advice data

How do I provide it?

The way you provide electronic pre-advice depends on which shipping system you use:

Click & Drop

Our user-friendly online platform, [Click & Drop](#) allows you to enter the required information and also print the right labels and International barcode for your parcel.

Some benefits of using Click & Drop:

- You complete the data on the system and it prints out all of the required labels for you to just stick on the parcel – ensuring you meet the requirements for all countries
- You no longer have to write labels out manually which should save you time
- If you post a lot of parcels, you can build up a product catalogue, so that you can enter repeat information with a click instead of having to type / write it all out again for each parcel
- As the data is sent ahead of the parcel, this should allow for an easier Customs process in the receiving country

Net Despatch

Net Despatch has been updated so you can provide the required pre-advice data.

Your own shipping solution (COSS), Shipping APIs (SAPI) and iShipper

We have updated the COSS and SAPI specifications so that you can provide the right data fields. This includes the addition of the UPU standard S10 1D barcode that is also required for overseas Postal services to be able to read the data. iShipper follows the same specifications and has also been updated.

What is the Trade Tariff or Harmonised System (HS) Code and where can I find it?

The HS or Trade Tariff Code is a set of digits used to categorise goods for Customs charging. We are developing a HS Code lookup tool for [Click & Drop](#) but in the meantime you can find the HMRC Trade Tariff Codes here:

<https://www.trade-tariff.service.gov.uk/trade-tariff/sections>. To use it, simply type in a description of your item/s and the site will generate your code. Royal Mail's Click & Drop requires an eight-digit code and can save the HS code when you have added it to a product, meaning you need only enter the details once.

For more information on the Harmonised System (Trade Tariff) code and guidance on the level of detail in the description, please see more information here:

- <http://www.wcoomd.org/en/topics/nomenclature/overview/hs-multi-purposes-tool.aspx>
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/classification-of-goods>

Why should I provide the Trade Tariff (HS) Code?

Provision of the Trade Tariff Code is required for commercial items to aid customs clearance. This is because the Trade Tariff Code lets the receiving Post know electronically what is in the parcel, enabling accurate Customs charging and simplified Customs clearance. If the Trade Tariff Code is not completed or completed incorrectly then the wrong charges could be applied, or in some cases, Customs authorities may stop the parcel and examine it, potentially delaying its journey.

To what level of detail does the Trade Tariff (HS) Code need to be applied (i.e. clothes - t-shirts, etc.)?

That depends on which shipping system you use: HS or Trade Tariff codes are generally 6, 8 or 10 digits in the postal world – Click & Drop requires 8 digits.

Will this same level of detail be required on the CN22 / CN23?

Yes. [Click & Drop](#) will generate a printable CN22 / CN23 label containing all the information provided electronically, including description and HS Code etc. Where a customer is using their own systems, the electronic data should match what is on the physical declaration.

Do I need to supply information for goods being posted to both the EU and the rest of the world?

Currently, electronic customs data needs to be supplied whenever a parcel is required to go through Customs clearance. At the moment this is only applicable to countries outside of the EU. However the (European) Union

Customs Code makes electronic pre-advice a requirement from 2020. We are suggesting that customers prepare to send data to all countries as we prepare for the potential UK exit from the Customs Union following BREXIT.

Will items now take longer to leave the UK?

Our despatch times should be the same or quicker as we can more easily scan parcels which are barcoded. Also recipient countries that use electronic customs data for processing may be able to clear items more quickly.

How will this affect overseas shipping pricing from Royal Mail?

This change does not currently affect pricing from Royal Mail. However, we know that Brazil for example has started adding a manual processing charge to Customs items that do not have electronic data. It is possible other countries could follow suit for items without electronic pre-advice data.

What if I cannot provide any electronic data because I am currently using a manual process?

If only manual data (i.e. CN22 or CN23 label only) is provided then this could result in the item being cleared manually; it will be opened, examined and therefore be delayed. If electronic data in the receiving country is required, your customer may incur fees or in the worst case scenario, the item may not be allowed into the destination country.

This is why we recommend you move from a manual process to our electronic pre-advice data. This can be done via our shipping system, [Click & Drop](#), which will capture and transmit all the required data. This electronic process is simple to set up, user-friendly and by producing all required labels, saves time in manually writing labels and commercial invoices.

What is the difference between a CN22 and a CN23?

CN23s are used for posting parcels with a value of over £270, whereas CN22s are used for goods valued at less than £270. You can also use a CN23 label if you need more product lines and there is not enough space on the CN22 label. For detailed instructions on how to fill in customs declarations forms [CN22](#) and [CN23](#) please see [Help with customs and sending goods abroad](#).

Are there any changes to the CN22 / CN23 documents?

No – the change is that the information provided in them will need to be submitted electronically. You should already be completing CN22s and CN23s fully. The CN22/CN23 label needs to be affixed on the outside of the parcel as before.

Does the CN22 / CN23 still need to be displayed on the outside of parcels?

Yes, you still need to show the CN22 / CN23 on the outside of your packages. We are not changing the size of the CN22 or CN23 – they are still 6cmx4cm so they should fit as usual. If however, listing out all of the products to apply HS Codes increases the size, then you can use a CN23 template which has more lines, regardless of the value of the goods inside. You can then fold up the CN23 and attach it to the parcel, ensuring that as much information as possible is on the outward, visible side of the parcel.

What if there isn't space to fill in all of the HS or Trade Tariff Codes on the CN22 / CN23 when my parcel contains multiple items?

The UPU template for a CN22 does not leave much room to complete multiple HS codes. If there is not enough space, then you can use a CN23 template which has more lines, regardless of the value of the goods inside. You can then fold up the CN23 and attach it to the parcel, ensuring that as much information as possible is on the outward, visible side of the parcel.

I use a 3rd party shipping system such as Metapack; what do I need to do?

The specifications for providers of other shipping systems have been updated and shared; those companies have been advised that this data must be captured and provided. For more information please contact your provider. Metapack have informed us they are not currently ready to provide the required specifications. For more information please contact your provider. EasyPost, Iforce, Intersoft, Linnworks, Madcapsule, Scurri, ShipStation,

Smartfreight, Sorted, Storefeeder, Veeqo and Zenstores all provide electronic pre-advice data and the correct 1D barcode.

For more information please contact your provider.

Will there be any difference to Customs charging?

There is no planned change in charging; any goods that are currently subject to existing Customs charges will still be subject to Customs charges regardless of electronic pre-advice data. But, if you are shipping to countries such as Brazil that are charging to manually input Customs data, your customer should no longer receive this additional processing charge if you move to provision of pre-advice data, electronically.

Does the requirement to provide data electronically apply to large letters or 'flats'?

Yes it does. Wherever a mail piece contains goods, it is required to go through customs clearance and will need to be accompanied by electronic data.

Will there be any changes to barcodes?

The electronic data will be encoded in a UPU standard S10 / 1D barcode. This means if you are posting outside of the EU, there will be two barcodes on your label rather than the one that you had before. This is because we need the 2D barcode for processing in the UK. The UPU standard requires electronic data to be in the S10 / 1D format. If you are using Royal Mail's Click & Drop, there will be an S10 barcode automatically applied as required. At a later date, if the UK leaves the Customs Union or the EU regulations take effect, systems will need to be updated to apply a 1D barcode and supply electronic data to all countries including the current EU members.

If you are using your own shipping solution (COSS), a Royal Mail Shipping API (SAPI) or another shipping platform provider, the requirements have already been outlined in the new specifications. Updates on which platforms are 'electronic data ready' can be found on our website www.royalmail.com/international-data.

I sell using Amazon / eBay and can't access customers' email addresses or mobile numbers; what do I do?

If you can't provide recipient contact details, you will still be able to post your items. However it does mean that you will not be able to offer your customers any free features that depend on these details, such as delivery notifications and a raft of experience enhancements, such as choice of delivery address, Delivered Duty Paid Lite which is currently available to Canada. Also, if there are problems with your parcel in the country you are posting to, for example, if they are unable to deliver it or if it is held up in Customs, they will not be able to contact the recipient to resolve these problems.

Concerned about Data Protection?

Some customers are concerned about supplying recipient contact details for data protection reasons. We manage all customer data according to the [Royal Mail General Terms and Conditions](#) and our [Privacy Policy](#) and all recipient contact details are protected by these policies including recipient mobile number and email address where supplied. The information we share with foreign Posts in order to deliver your parcels and notify recipients is also protected under our existing Terms and Conditions and Privacy Policy by means of a Data Sharing Agreement that we have with each Post and a further agreement between us and the International Post Corporation (IPC). No data can be shared with foreign Posts or the IPC without these Data Sharing Agreements in place so there is effectively no difference in the level of protection of data when sharing electronic pre-advice data with countries overseas.

What good looks like: how to populate the required fields.

The below table provides an overview for each of the required pre-advice fields and explains how they need to be populated. There are also examples of good field values.

Field Name	Description and how to populate the field
SENDER NAME	The despatching Business Name E.g. "David Evans"
SENDER TELEPHONE	A contact telephone number for despatching site/operation E.g. "01234567869"
SENDER EMAIL	A valid contact email address for despatching site/operation E.g. "Reis.stewart@royalmail.com"
SENDER ADDRESS 1	The first lines of the sender's (despatching) site address E.g. "1 Broadgate"
SENDER POST TOWN	The Post town of the despatching site E.g. "London"
SENDER POSTCODE	The Postcode of the despatching site E.g. "EC2M 2QS"
RECIPIENT BUSINESS NAME	Can be captured with the Recipient Name or on its own i.e. Recipient Business Name or Recipient Name must contain a value, However if not captured then the Recipient Name must be captured. Must contain "c/o Post Office" if item is using Local Collect delivery option. E.g. "Smart Investments"
RECIPIENT NAME	Can be captured with the Recipient Business Name or on its own i.e. Recipient Business Name or Recipient Name must contain a value. However if not captured then the Recipient Business Name must be captured. For local collect service the Recipient Name must be populated. E.g. "Sam Anderson"
RECIPIENT TELEPHONE	Telephone number of person to whom parcel is to be delivered in case of issues arising with the shipment E.g. "00491234567898"
DELIVERY ADDRESS 1	The first line of the Delivery Address. Not required if field 21 or 22 are populated E.g. "33 Clark Street"
DELIVERY BUILDING NAME	The Building Name of the Delivery Address. Accept destination information in English A-Z and 0-9. If special characters to replace with <space> Not required, if Address Line 1 is populated "E.g. Nexus"
DELIVERY BUILDING NUMBER	The building number of the delivery address Not required, if the Address Line 1 is populated E.g. "40"
DELIVERY POST TOWN	The Post town of the Delivery Address. If used truncate to 12 characters where required. E.g. "Frankfurt"
DELIVERY COUNTRY	ISO 3166-1 alpha 2, two-letter or alpha-3 three-letter country codes for the Destination Country. If the ISO 3166-1 alpha 2 variant is to be used then right pad with a [space] character E.g. "DE " or "DEU"
VALUE OF CONTENTS	Total value of the item, to 2 decimal places. The decimal point is not included. For example £12.50 should be populated as 1250
ITEM WEIGHT	The gross weight of the units in the item, expressed in Kilogram & 3 Decimal place
UNIT VALUE	Value per individual content item, to include 2 decimal places and decimal point not included. For example £12.50 should be populated as 1250
UNIT WEIGHT	Weight per individual content item, expressed in kilogram. Up to 3 Decimal Places E.g. 2 kilograms and 950 grams should be populated as "2.950"
QUANTITY OF UNITS	Number of content/units within the parcel/Item e.g. if 2 packets of bolts are sent within a physical parcel, this field would be populated with "2"
POSTAGE COST	Postal paid for Item, Required if Total Value of Item is above £270, But may not be available at the instance of sending ITMATT message to GXS, since the Mail item has not been posted hence it's optional. Value is given to without Decimal places as elsewhere, e.g. £12.50 as 1250? Sender's Currency only, which is the Currency Indicator Value
CURRENCY INDICATOR	Currency code for all values relating to the Shipment, as per ISO 4217. If unknown GBP should be used
UNIT DESCRIPTION	Description of contents (units) e.g. "Bolts 2 pack x 50" for 2 pack containing 50 bolts each
CATEGORY/NATURE OF ITEM	Always select from the following options: "G" for Gift "S" for Commercial Sample "D" for Documents "R" for Returned Goods "O" for Other "M" for Mixed Content
EXPLANATION OF NATURE OF ITEM	If "O" is selected for Category/Nature of Item, then sender would need to capture the description of the parcel contents. E.g. "Sporting Goods"
TRADE TARIFF (HS) CODE	Should be populated if known E.g. "490199"
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN OF CONTENTS	To be expressed in 3 digit ISO 3166 code Recommended for Commercial Items but not Mandatory E.g. "GB"