

MY CHECKLISTS

usps.com stamps.com

usps sm, med, lrg boxes international pkgs padded envelopes

Home/Office Fulfillment Checklist

ups fedex

packing peanuts

packing tape

online postage shipping labels click 'n' ship label printer

BartSmithWorld.com

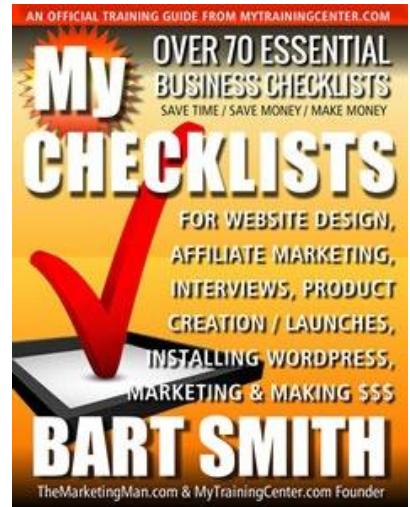
Home “Fulfillment Center” Checklist

by BartSmith.com

Are you responsible for fulfillment from your home/office? It's wise to keep ample supplies on hand for shipping moderate amounts of product to your customers. I recommend you work with a fulfillment company and outsource shipping of much larger orders. Here's a quick checklist of supplies and some tips on processing orders professionally and efficiently.

While mailing products may sound simple, you need a system in place to ensure you don't waste your time or money. The following list should help you organize the ideal fulfillment center and keep fulfillment supplies and materials in-stock when needs arise.

Depending on your situation, consider the following suggestions:



1. ___ Envelopes — What kind of envelopes do you need? [Large envelopes](#) to slip a book or other product into and/or [padded envelopes](#) depending on the product? Search online for the lowest prices and buy in bulk. The costs for mailing different types of envelopes will be based on what you are shipping such as a book or two books. If your package exceeds a certain weight, look at the different postage pricing options provided by the USPS or UPS.

2. ___ Boxes — Depending on (1) what your needs are, (2) what you're shipping, and (3) where you buy your postage from, you have several options. You could order [custom made boxes online in bulk](#) and store them at your home/office or you could [order free boxes from the USPS](#) if you plan to ship priority mail, Express Mail, or Flat Rate (small, medium and large).

I found using the USPS Regional Flat Rate [A Box](#) or [B Box](#) serves many of my shipping needs. USPS flat rate boxes are a good deal too because no matter the weight of the items you ship, if you can pack them into a flat rate box you will always pay the same rate.

3. ___ Bubble Wrap — What are you shipping? It's always good to have a large roll of [bubble wrap](#) on hand to protect whatever it is you're shipping.

4. ___ Packing Peanuts — These are a must when you are packing most items. You can shop Walmart, your local mailbox service retailer, or online for good buys. Most of the office supply stores charge more for packing peanuts not unlike movie theaters that charge a few dollars for the movie and \$25.00 for snacks. Your best bet is to shop online and have them delivered to you.

5. ___ Packing Tape — My favorite is [Duck EZ Start Brand Packing Tape With Dispenser](#). I don't like using tape guns and most other tape dispensers are too flimsy and fall apart in use. (Besides, tape guns are noisy.)

DUCK EZstart tape rolls can be bought at virtually any Walmart. It's a strong and inexpensive tape. You may prefer other brands, but this one works for me.

6. ___ Paper Cutter — Having at least one [paper cutter](#) handy when you need to cut a clean edge so it looks professional. I use cutting boards to cut precise measurement, even bubble wrap strips for lining boxes. When you are mailing a variety of boxes, you don't want to be cutting anything manually.

7. ___ Sharp Scissors — There are few business/work tasks that don't require a good pair of scissors. Restrict a designated pair of scissors to the office and/or shipping area to avoid their misuse or damage.

8. ___ Box Cutting Knife — How many times have you searched for something to open a box such as the kitchen knives or that pair of scissors. Having the right tools to do a job saves time and wear and tear.

9. ___ Assembly Table — It's much more efficient to fulfill orders on a [long folding table](#) opposed to working out of the kitchen, dining room or the floor. Depending on the volume that you are shipping, you might want to invest in several tables. They are highly portable and very affordable. Compare prices from \$25-\$50.

10. ___ Digital Postal Weight Scale — Depending on how you calculate your postage, invest in an official postage weight scale to help you determine the weight of your envelopes and/or boxes. This will determine postage and allow you to print accurate mailing labels. [USPS postage weight scales](#) can be purchased for \$25-\$40. You can find them online at Amazon.com, Staples.com and even Walmart.

11. ___ Mailing Labels — What are you shipping? Envelopes? Boxes? Depending on what you're shipping, you might choose from a variety of mailing label sizes to meet your label printing needs. Again, how are you paying for postage? UPS? Are there machines that print postage only? Yes. They can run between \$100-\$500. One resource for labels online is [OnlineLabels.com](#). Otherwise, before you buy, determine how you will be printing, where you'll be printing it from, and then find the exact printer that will print postage on peel-and-stick labels. Peel-and-stick labels on a full 8.5" x 11" sheet allow you to peel 2, 4 or more labels from one sheet. You might purchase peel-and-stick labels on a roll depending on your printer. For example, the [Zebra LP2844 Thermal Label Printer](#) is a perfect printer for printing USPS or UPS labels on a roll.

Search [Amazon.com](#), online printer stores, even [Ebay.com](#) for best buys. Most companies sell inexpensive printer labels cheap when you buy in bulk. I have a supplier on Ebay.com that takes care of my label needs.

12. ___ Postage Purchasing Account — Who enjoys standing in line at the post office or UPS store? I prefer to drop off my packages for mailing and walk away. To do this, decide where you will buy your postage. I'm not a big fan of Stamps.com, per se. There's a monthly fee or they

don't generate labels for all of their USPS boxes, and I found out they don't handle USPS Regional Box A, B or C. If this has changed, hey, great! Those particular USPS Flat Rate box types are a tad smaller than USPS Priority Medium and Large boxes, but shipping is cheaper locally within your region. This is important if you want to save money shipping items in those boxes within regions closer to you. You can save as much as \$5 (or more) on a single shipment. [USPS® Click-N-Ship®](#) offers a free account where you can purchase (and print) postage labels for any package provided you ship Priority or Express mail. You cannot use USPS® Click-N-Ship® for First Class mail. Other options include postage meter companies such [PitneyBowes.com](#), a competitor of [Stamps.com](#). Compare rates, fees and printing solutions.

13. Postage Label Printing Machine — Again, this is based on your shipping needs. If you do a lot of shipping, it might be worth investing in a postage label printing machine like the [Zebra LP2844 Thermal Label Printer](#). Having a hassle-free machine to print postage labels is well worth my time and money.

14. Storage Cabinet or Rack — To secure your shipping supplies, store them in accessible locations where you can maintain an adequate supply and they are dust-free such as a large storage cabinet. A good one might cost you \$100-\$200.

15. USPS Drop Off Points / Hours — If you ship packages via the USPS, here are some tips: (1) the hours of operation during the week and on Saturday) and (2) the last pick up times during the week and on Saturday. This applies to domestic (USA/CANADA and International shipments). Identify the locations for at least five postal locations near you. Not all offices have the same open/close times, weekend hours, and last pick up hours. Keep the information handy including the phone numbers for each location.

Another good idea is to introduce yourself to each post office manager/director (and the counter employees) particularly if you plan to ship a lot of products. Whenever you need help or have questions, you can go to someone specific for assistance especially when dealing with a lost or stolen package.

Even though the USPS might direct you to call-in service centers for such matters, it's always good to have a contact on the inside. I've personally given the staff my world famous chocolate chip cookies to show my appreciation for their good service.

16. UPS Drop Off Points / Last Pick-Up Hours — Know where the UPS drop off locations are even if you use USPS to ship your packages.

17. FedEx Drop Off Points / Last Pick-Up Hours — Know these times so you never have to waste time researching information when you need it and to avoid missing deadlines.

18. International Shipping — This is a tricky one. Are you using USPS, DHL, etc. to ship internationally? My suggestion is to use quality packaging materials due to excessive handling prior to reaching final destinations.

Light-weight, thin, flimsy boxes and envelopes are risky. Stuff envelopes inside of other envelopes for extra protection and use sturdy boxes that will withstand heavy wear and tear due to weight from other packages, mishandling, and travel mishaps by train, truck and air.

Review the checklist above and make note of what's missing for your particular needs! Never be caught without the supplies you need to manage your home/office effectively.

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