2021 Also Off To A Great Package Year

Last year, the Package Express Center Network of UPS Shippers overall experienced dramatic, unprecedented, and historic increases in both retail package processing and shipping volume and in retail package dropoff volume. The volume increases are amazing due to many stores being temporarily closed, drive thru services only, curbside service only, and/or shorter hours and/or days.

Also in 2020, Package Express Center Corporate partnered with UPS Corporate to bring UPS Access Point services to our existing PEC locations nationwide. This allows our existing PEC centers just another way to expand their existing UPS services. By PEC centers also offering UPS AP services our locations increase customer traffic even more and adds additional profits. PEC set up almost 600 new AP locations within our existing PEC National Network last year and hope to add many more locations this year.

Access Point Locations are important now to your community, customers and UPS – but will become much more important in the future. Offering AP services of letting UPS deliver packages to your store for customer pick-up in Small Town America saves your customer and UPS time, effort and money. If your store has not added this additional UPS service, now is the time to get it set-up.

Warning: *While UPS is in need of additional UAP locations, and if your store chooses to not add this; PEC has no control if UPS sets up a AP location in your community. Your location would not wish to have this happen as AP locations can also accept RPDO packages – which might reduce your existing volume of these type of packages.*

Processing Drop Off Packages – Did you know you have OPTIONS?

Accepting dropoff packages, as you've come to learn, is likely a majority of what you spend time doing at your shipping counter. Package Express Centers obviously has our own recommendations on how to handle these packages, but you do have options on how to handle business. The strongest recommendation we have is to make sure of the Auto-Upload feature if you don't already. Uploading your packages timely is the most important factor in accepting drop-offs and there's no better way than immediately and automatically. Packages that are uploaded late are not eligible for rebate. If you're using this feature you've likely noticed that this upload happens immediately after printing (or choosing not to print) the receipt for your customer. Uploading your drop-offs before the driver picks up is necessary for your quarterly rebate.

As a business owner, manager, clerk, etc., you know that normal procedures can sometimes take a backseat when things are really busy in your store. Package processing is usually a very fast process, but when that line is growing you want to help as many customers as you can as quickly as you can. You are prompted to answer if you would like to print a receipt for your customer each time you enter a dropoff.

Many dropoff customers aren't interested in a receipt. This means, in a pinch, you can accept these packages and set them to the side to scan and upload as soon as you have time. This can help you avoid long wait times and improve your customer experience.

Other Notables: Your store is not responsible for any package claims on drop off packages once UPS has picked them up. If a customer attempts to start the claims process with you, simply direct them to whomever created or issued the label. UPS will not allow you to handle this process for the customer.

In order to qualify for your quarterly rebate you cannot charge your customers any fee to accept drop off packages unless the package requires additional packaging services, such as adding packing material or taping. If your customer didn't have the appropriate materials to safely package their drop off you are more than welcome to provide that additional service to them. In fact, we highly recommend offering packaging services for all retail package customers.

Why You Must Exit Your Total System Shipping Software Each Night

Updating your UPS Processing & Shipping System is an extremely vital process when you are involved in the shipping world. Rules, regulations, and rates are constantly changing and it's important to stay on top of things to ensure your data and files from PEC and UPS are correct and current.

A large variety of updates are sent to your system regularly from PEC and UPS. Luckily, we've made this process as easy as possible; however, it is still up to you to make sure this is done efficiently, timely, and with as little impact to your package processing as possible. Understanding just a few simple concepts will make this process easier on you and your staff while making sure your customer has a good experience shipping with you.

The Total System Shipping software checks for updates in two key areas – when opening the program and when running a manifest. These should be two clear times when your customers are not waiting to ship a package. These updates can take some time depending on size of update, internet connection, and computer performance, so it is very important to open the program early in the morning, not when a customer is waiting to ship a package. Updates from PEC and UPS typically do not take over 5 minutes as a general rule (internet speed and computer performance are a factor). You should be sure to run your manifest just before your driver arrives, while also choosing a time when customers aren't waiting. All of these things combine to make the experience for you, your staff, your customers, PEC, and UPS the best possible!

Tiny & Small, Big and/or Really Heavy and High Value Packages - What to Look For

Very small or too small: Does your customer have a tiny box/envelope to ship? The smaller the package the more likely to be lost, as they can easily slide under an item or be missed. In the event your customer has a tiny package, it should be placed in another larger box or repackaged to aid in preventing loss of the package. We suggest that you don't ship smaller than a 5 x 5 x 5, small shoe box size, or larger.

Huge size or too heavy: Does your customer have a big/heavy box to ship? You should be aware that your store cannot ship a package over 150 lbs or over a combined length and girth of 165 inches. If the package is too large to ship, your software will notify you. In the event that happens do not ship said package. If the package is too large to ship and you process it through by altering the weight and dimensions in any way, you put your store at risk of receiving an over maximum size charge. This charge cannot be reversed and can be $920 or more for shipping something that is too large or heavy! Many times, when shipping something too large – it cannot be properly packed because is already too large and packing cannot be added. Do NOT ship something if you cannot use packing. If something is too large and/or too heavy it should not be shipped via UPS at all – the package needs to be shipped via freight.

PEC has seen shipments that were too large and too heavy that should have been sent via freight and ALL ended up as denied claims – such as an oven, grandfather clock, furniture, slab of marble, Pac-Man game console, huge speakers, toilets, 100 plus china set in one box, etc.

High Value: Does your customer have a high value package to ship? High declared value packages should be packaged to protect the item. Proper packaging for these would be double boxed with 3 to 4 inches of bubble wrap or foam between the two boxes. This is to prevent damage to the high value item. You will be requested to STOP what you are doing and call PEC for extremely high value packages so that we determine what is being shipped, how you are shipping it and how it is packaged. Even when NOT prompted to call PEC for extremely high values you should be questioning your customers on all packages as to what is being shipped and how it is packaged to prevent damage and claims.
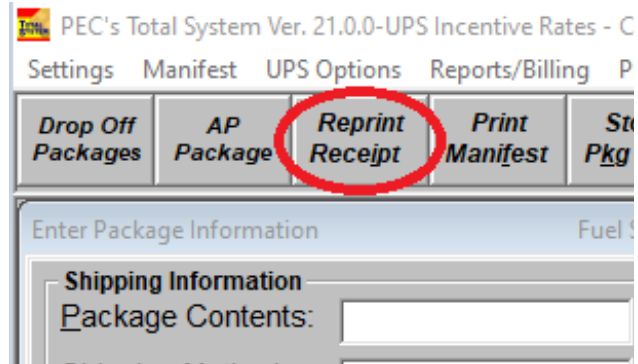
Most of all packages that are shipped are under 15 pounds, most of the time unbreakable and a low value. So when they are not the usual low weight, low value and unbreakable package, take a minute and check the above items if it's a tiny, big, heavy, or a high value package you want to ensure they are packaged correctly.

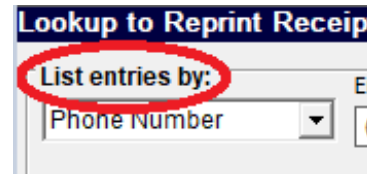# How To Look up a Package in Your Total System Shipping Software

When looking up a previously entered package you have a couple of options. The best place to start is reprint receipt. All package info is available up reprinting a previously entered packages receipt.

If you needed to contact to shipper of a particular package that customers name and phone number prints at the top of the receipt. Further customer info can be found under PEC Utilities then Edit Customer and Ship to information.

Maybe you have only parts of information available to you such as ship to name, date of shipment, receipt number. There is a drop down bar in the upper left hand corner of the reprint receipt box. Be aware that all but 2 of those options will search your retail packages only. The drop down options box lets you look up a package by: Phone number, Receipt number, ship from last name, ship to last name, ship from company, ship to company, tracking number, all receipts, date of shipment, ARS/Internet, ARS/Internet by phone, and UPS returns.

The options for looking up a drop off package entry are ARS/internet and, If you enter additional info such as phone number when entering drop off packages, you can search using ARS/Internet by phone to look up using the phone number that was entered at the time of processing.

UPS Has Suspended the UPS Service Guarantee
(also referred to as the UPS Money Back Guarantee) effective March 26, 2020 and until further notice, for all shipments from any origin to any destination.

As the shipping industry continues to grow rampantly there are more and more factors to consider, as a UPS Authorized Service Provider, than ever. Many of these factors will impact the consumer more-so than your store; however, educating yourself and your employees can be the difference between having a satisfied customer and a customer with a negative experience. You can not expect your customers to be educated on current shipping conditions.

As we are entering a season of the year where delivery times are more important than any other time of the year, we are also entering a time where vastly more packages are being shipped. If this sounds like a recipe for disaster, that's because it is. In addition to this, there are at least 3 more things to consider that make this year different than years prior. One obvious answer is COVID. Nearly every state has different policies and regulations for handling the virus. This impacts how packages are picked up, sorted at the hubs, handled by drivers, and delivered to their destination. On top of a disrupt in standard optimized procedures, UPS, in part, has been tasked with distributing vaccinations to different parts of the country. While this may not sound like a large task, UPS must handle the additional shipping volume on top of coordinating with a US government that is in the process of changing hands. Lastly, due to the changes required to deal with a growing pandemic, UPS made a change earlier in the year that simply erased any and all delivery time guarantees on domestic packages.

The suspension of the UPS Service Guarantee for all shipments is a change that has gone somewhat quietly, as it has been in effect since March 26, 2020; however, this is a major change and is something that is very important to know, understand, and most importantly, express to your customer. During the holiday season, your customers will be shipping packages with the expectation of a specific delivery time. This is something they, you, nor UPS can accurately predict at this time. It is important that your customer understands that - while damage and loss claims can still be filed for refund, NO refunds will be considered for packages that were delivered later than the customer expected. This applies to all packages: shipped at your store, shipped at a UPS Store, dropped off at a UPS dropbox, personally handed to a UPS driver, etc. It is not a bad idea to express this to every UPS customer. It is better to make this clear on the front-end than deal with customers that are angry that their gifts were not delivered before Christmas.