

United States Basic Domestic Letter Mail Rates, 1816-1869

Effective Date	Distance	Rate	Special Rates	Notes
May 1, 1816	to 30 miles	6¢	Ship rate: 2¢ fee added to postage if carried by mail; 6¢ if delivered at port office Drop rate: 1¢ (all weights)	Ship Letter defined: "Every letter brought into the U.S. or carried from one port to another in a private ship or vessel"
	30 to 80 miles	10¢		
	80 to 150 miles	12½¢		
	150 to 400 miles	18½¢		
	over 400 miles	25¢		
May 1, 1825	to 30 miles	6¢	Ship rate: 2¢ fee added to postage if carried by mail; 6¢ if delivered at port Drop rate: 1¢ (all weights) Way letters: 1¢ (all weights) Outbound ship letter: 1¢ fee	Act superceded and replaced all previous postal Acts letters received from steamboats rated as if carried in contract mail
	30 to 80 miles	10¢		
	80 to 150 miles	12½¢		
	150 to 400 miles	18¾¢		
	over 400 miles	25¢		
July 1, 1845	to 300 miles	5¢	Drop rate: 2¢ (all weights) Way letters: 1¢ (all weights)	
	over 300 miles	10¢		
July 1, 1847	to 300 miles	5¢	to/from Chagres: 20¢ to/from Panama: 30¢ to/from Oregon: 40¢	
	over 300 miles	10¢		
August 14, 1848	Intra California letters: 12½¢			
July 1, 1851	to 3,000 miles	3¢	(if not prepaid, 5¢) (if not prepaid, 10¢)	
	over 3,000 miles	6¢		
Apr 1, 1855	to 3,000 miles	3¢		prepayment compulsory
	over 3,000 miles	10¢		
February 27, 1861	over the Rockies	10¢	(to points west of the Rockies from points to the east, and vice versa) Ship rate: 2¢ plus inland postage if carried by mail, 5¢ if delivered at port	
July 1, 1863	any distance	3¢	Ship rate: double letter mail rates Drop rate: 2¢ (per one-half ounce)	way fees abolished
March 3, 1865	Drop rate: for offices without carrier delivery service reduced to 1¢			
<i>Rates are for single sheet letters prior to 1845 Act and thereafter as letters to one-half ounce. Multiple rates in progression. Distances were calculated by the route the letter traveled. Free mail and soldier mail not included in above rates.</i>				