International Post Corporation

New U.S. customs regulations: Temporary restrictions on postal goods shipping to the U.S. for private and business customers

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After August 22, Deutsche Post and DHL Parcel Germany will no longer be able to accept and transport parcels and postal items containing goods from business customers destined for the U.S.

Bonn - Due to the new customs regulations under the Executive Order "Suspending Duty-Free De Minimis Treatment for all Countries," which will take effect on August 29, 2025, there will be temporary restrictions on postal goods shipping to the U.S. for private and business customers in Germany. After August 22, Deutsche Post and DHL Parcel Germany will no longer be able to accept and transport parcels and postal items containing goods from business customers destined for the US. The reason for these anticipated temporary restrictions is new processes required by U.S. authorities for postal shipping, which differ from the previously applicable regulations. Key questions remain unresolved, particularly regarding how and by whom customs duties will be collected in the future, what additional data will be required, and how the data transmission to the U.S. Customs and Border Protection will be carried out.

Parcels and packages from individuals to individuals with a value of up to $100, which are declared as 'gift,' are not affected by the Executive Order. However, these shipments will be subject to even stricter controls than before to prevent the misuse of private gift shipments for sending commercial goods. There are also no changes for the shipping of documents in letters. Additionally, goods shipping via DHL Express and the commercial import of goods into the U.S. under the currently applicable customs rates will still be possible. These rates also apply to private customer packages with a value over $100.

These changes affect all postal and parcel service providers worldwide, many of whom have already announced a suspension of postal shipping to the U.S. The Association of European Postal Services - PostEurop - has also communicated that its member companies will need to temporarily restrict or suspend the shipping of goods through postal networks to the U.S. in accordance with the relevant national authorities.

Difference between postal and commercial customs clearance

The process changes of the Executive Order affect postal and commercial customs clearance in different ways. The transport and import of postal shipments are handled by national postal companies that have special agreements with customs authorities and the United States Postal Service (USPS). The postal customs clearance process is generally simpler and more cost-effective. The basis for postal customs clearance is the Universal Postal Convention. This method of importing shipments is no longer available for commercial shipments and any shipments with a value over $100 for the time being.

Commercial customs clearance, as offered by DHL Express, remains available to customers. However, the previous duty-free threshold (the so-called "De Minimis") is also being eliminated here. All commercially cleared shipments, including those with a value under $100, are subject to customs clearance. For goods from Germany respectively the European Union, the customs rate is expected to be 15 percent of the goods' value - some product categories may be subject to higher duties. This type of customs clearance primarily affects commercial goods traffic and is often carried out by specialized customs agents or brokers. Commercial shipments are subject to stricter requirements, particularly regarding the description, classification, and proof of value of the goods, as well as other controls.

The declaration of goods when shipping with DHL Express is done by DHL as the customs agent in the U.S. The payment of the applicable duties is made according to the "Incoterm" (International Commercial Terms) agreed upon between the sender and the recipient. This specifies who is responsible for the costs and risks during the transportation of goods - and who is responsible for customs clearance.

Until the Executive Order takes effect, the current regulation still applies for shipments from the European Union, allowing goods with a low value (up to $800) to be imported into the U.S. without customs duties. With the changes, all imports, except purely private shipments of gifts with a value under $100, will be subject to customs duties as of August 29, 2025. These regulations apply to the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

DHL is closely monitoring the further developments and is in contact with U.S. authorities, together with its European partners. The company's goal is to resume postal goods shipping to the U.S. as quickly as possible.

Source: DHL Group

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