

# How to stamp out holiday mail hassles

WITH A LITTLE BIT of care, holiday cards and packages can arrive on time and in good shape, says Detroit Postmaster Gene Cole.

In addition to mailing early, postal customers are urged to properly address cards and packages with the name, house number and street (or post office box) number, and the city, state and ZIP Code reserved for the last line. Use of apartment numbers is strongly encouraged.

"It is also a good idea to put a slip of paper with the recipient's name and address and your return address inside parcels, and be sure the addressing on the outside of the parcel includes your return address and ZIP Code," Cole says. "This offers you a second chance of safe delivery, in case the outside address is obscured or lost, or the package is damaged."

Customers also are reminded to check the size of their envelopes before mailing Christmas and other holiday cards. Letter size standards require that envelopes be at least 3½ inches high and 5 inches long to be accepted for mailing.

Parcels will arrive at their intended destination in good shape of fol-

low a few simple suggestions:

**CUSHION:** Make sure contents are well-cushioned and there is no empty space in the box. Use crumpled newspaper around the item — including all sides, top and bottom. Commercially available foam shells of air-pocket padding also are good cushioning materials. Padded mailing bags are a good cushioning materials. Padded mailing bags are a good way to mail small items.

**DON'T OVERWRAP:** Just use your carton. Brown paper and twine cord are not necessary. Paper can

rip, and twine can become entangled in mail processing equipment. This can cause the loss of the mailing and return addresses.

**SEAL PROPERLY:** Close your parcel with one of the three recommended types of tape: pressure sensitive, nylon-reinforced kraft paper, or fiber-glass-reinforced pressure sensitive. Don't use cellophane tape — it aren't sturdy enough. It's a good idea to put a slip with the address and return address inside the parcel.

**AVOID SMUDGES:** Use smudge-

proof ink for your addressing. Addresses can be protected with clear tape.

**POSITION ADDRESSES PROPERLY:** Put the recipient's address in the lower right hand portion of the package. Put your return address in the upper left corner of only one side of the package. Remove all other labels.

**USE ZIP CODES:** Be sure to include the ZIP Code in both the recipient's and your address. Remember, wrong ZIP Codes can delay the mail.

**APARTMENT NUMBERS:** Using apartment numbers or suite numbers, when you know them, helps the Postal Service deliver mail in large buildings.

**TIME IT RIGHT:** Mail early in the month and early in the day.

**USE THE RIGHT SERVICE:** Irreplaceable items, such as jewelry and other valuables, should be sent by registered mail. Avoid mailing cash whenever possible.

## Gift guide produced by O&E

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