

# How to Package and Ship Cremated Remains

Publication 139  
September 2019

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The United States Postal Service® offers Priority Mail Express® and Priority Mail Express International® service for shipping human or animal cremated remains domestically and internationally. Whether you are shipping the remains of a loved one or a pet to or between family members or to an artisan to incorporate the remains into blown glass or other works of art, this publication is designed to provide the necessary preparation and packaging requirements that will aid in protecting this special mailing during transit.

## General Instructions

Cremated remains are permitted to be mailed to any domestic address when the package is prepared as described below and in the referenced postal manuals.

Cremated remains are permitted to be mailed to an international address when the designating country does not prohibit the contents and when Priority Mail Express International service is available to that country. You can verify this by checking the Individual Country Listing in the *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM®) (see Postal Service References below).

## Packaging

You will need a primary inner sift-proof container, cushioning material, and an outer shipping package.

**Note:** A sift-proof container is any vessel that does not allow loose powder to leak or sift out. There are many options available to store cremated remains — from simple wooden boxes to decorative urns. USPS® recommends consulting with a licensed funeral director to help you select the best container.

## Inner Primary Container

- **Domestic Shipping:** The inner primary container must be strong, durable, and constructed in such a manner as to protect and

securely contain the contents inside. It must be properly sealed and sift-proof.

- **International Shipping:** A funeral urn is required as the inner primary container. It must be properly sealed and sift-proof.

## Seal and Address the Inner Primary Container

In the event the shipping label becomes detached from the outer container, the Postal Service™ recommends that you put the sift-proof container in a sealed plastic bag. Then, attach a label with the complete return address and delivery address on the sealed plastic bag and the wording “Cremated Remains.”

## Cushioning Material

For both domestic and international shipping, place sufficient cushioning all around the inner primary sift-proof container to prevent it shifting inside the outer shipping package during transit and to absorb any shock to prevent breakage.

## Outer Shipping Package

For both domestic and international shipping, cremated remains must be shipped by USPS Priority Mail Express or Priority Mail Express International Service utilizing either a USPS-produced or customer-supplied shipping package. If using a customer-supplied shipping package, it must be strong and durable to withstand transportation handling.

For convenience, the Postal Service has a Priority Mail Express Cremated Remains box that may be used for domestic or international shipments using the applicable Priority Mail Express service. The Priority Mail Express Cremated Remains box can be ordered online at the Postal Store on USPS.com® and is available as part of a kit.

Before closing and sealing the shipping package, the Postal Service recommends adding a slip of paper with both the sender’s and recipient’s address and contact information inside the package. This extra step will help to identify the sender and receiver in the event the shipping label becomes detached.



## Labeling and Markings

To increase the visibility of mailpieces containing cremated remains, the outer shipping box (USPS-produced or customer-supplied) containing cremated remains must be marked with Label 139, *Cremated Remains*, affixed to each side (including top and bottom). Label 139 is available at the Postal Store on USPS.com or can be obtained at a retail Post Office™ location.

### Label 139



(Dimensions: 4" x 6")

## Address Your Package

### Domestic Shipping:

- A complete return address and delivery address must be used. The address format for a package is the same as for an envelope. Write or print address labels clearly. Use ink that does not smear and include the addresses and ZIP Codes™ for you and your recipient.

- Double check the mailing address, especially the ZIP Code. You can use Look Up a ZIP Code™ on USPS.com.
- Mailers may generate single-ply Priority Mail Express labels through Click-N-Ship® or other USPS-approved methods.

## International Shipping:

A complete return address and delivery address must be used. The mailer must indicate the identity of the contents (Cremated Remains) on the required applicable customs declaration form. To determine the applicable required customs form, see IMM Section 123.61.

**Note:** If available, the cremation certificate should be attached to the outer box or made easily accessible. The sender is responsible for adherence to any restrictions or observances noted by the designating country.

## Postal Service References

For more information on the Postal Service's requirements for shipping cremated remains:

- For domestic shipping, see:
  - Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*, Section 451.22: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4\\_017.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4_017.htm) and Appendix C, Packaging Instruction 10c: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc\\_036.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc_036.htm).
  - *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, Domestic Mail Manual (DMM®) 503: <https://pe.usps.gov/text/dmm300/503.htm>.

- For international shipping, see:
  - Publication 52, *Hazardous, Restricted, and Perishable Mail*, Section 451.22: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4\\_017.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52c4_017.htm) and Appendix C, Packaging Instruction 10c: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc\\_036.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/pub52/pub52apxc_036.htm).
  - *Mailing Standards of the United States Postal Service*, International Mail Manual (IMM) Section 139: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc1\\_018.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc1_018.htm) and the Individual Country Listing for observations, prohibitions and restrictions: <https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immctry.htm>.
- Visit a Post Office to speak with a Sales and Service Associate.
- Call 1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777).
- FAQs on USPS.com.
- Video – How to Package and Ship Cremated Remains: <https://www.youtube.com/user/uspstv>.

For postal supplies, visit the Postal Store on USPS.com: <https://store.usps.com>.