

# BFPO Quick Customer Guide

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## Foreword

BFPO customers can ensure their item is delivered by following the advice given within this quick service guide and more detailed guidance, Terms & Conditions and disclaimers can be obtained [here](#)

# Need to Know- International Mail Update

**What is Changing** - Mail providers including the British Forces Post Office (BFPO) sending international mail are being asked for full consignment data before we can move mail forward in some global regions.

**When and Where** – BFPO are already preparing to provide full consignment data to most EU locations from 1 July 2023 and to Republic of Cyprus on 2 November 2023.

**Why is this important?** Mail item information is used by local country Customs Officials to assure and assess mail imports and to do that, BFPO must capture and record the required data from every item we send. Non-compliant mail results in delay, rejection, and return and in some cases disposal, if we are unable to return items. Below is a list of issues **that can** impact your item being delivered or returned:

- No customs declaration or visible commercial invoice.
- No return address.
- Item contains dangerous air cargo items (aerosols) or prohibited items.
- Illegible handwritten addresses.
- Oversized or overweight.
- Business items (from UK Retail ecommerce) not having Harmonised System Codes included in the customs declaration.
- Customers ordering business items to a UK address and then asking friends/family to post items over a Post Office counter and declaring as a gift. These items will be noticed by EU Customs Officers and will lead to delays to part or all mail consignments as we **will be unable to move mail forward without EU Customs permission.**

# Services we Provide

Our customers can ensure their item is delivered by following the advice given within this service guide.

- We **do not** offer a guaranteed timed service or provide consequential loss for any BFPO mail items.
- We **don't permit** use of pre-printed Royal Mail postage labels (e.g., from Click & Drop system) to return mail from overseas locations. These labels have a limited life span (2 – 4 days) and only become active when they receive their first Royal Mail scan which is not compatible with the way that BFPO mail is returned to UK.
- **You can** post private items over a Post Office/Forces Post Office counter up to 20Kg (size restrictions apply and are found [here](#)).
- **You can** order online goods up to 30Kg (size restrictions apply and are found [here](#)).
- **You can** post MOD Enduring Families Free Mail Service items to authorised Operations and HM Ships if:
  - Packets are limited to 2 kg in weight.
  - Items don't contain prohibited items.
  - Size limits: Minimum one surface at least 90 mm x 140 mm. Maximum length + depth + width = 900 mm width greatest single dimension not more than 600 mm.
  - Only relatives and friends within the UK or at BFPO addresses can send packets to named Service personnel and MOD deployed civilians only, in authorised operational areas.
  - They must be handed in to a UK Post Office/overseas Forces Post Office.
- **You can** post Forces Free Air Letters (Blueys) in any red post box or hand them in at any UK Post Office/overseas Forces Post Office.

- **You can** become a BFPO Commercial Receipts customer or use existing Courier Companies who currently hold accounts with BFPO to get your online order to BFPO Northolt. The current list of Courier Companies who can deliver items to BFPO is:
  - DHL Express (UK) Ltd
  - DPD Group Ltd
  - DX Network Services Ltd
  - FedEx UK Ltd
  - Flight logistics Group Ltd
  - Hermes Parcelnet Ltd
  - Parcelforce Worldwide
  - Secured Mail Ltd
  - TNT Post UK Ltd
  - YODEL Delivery Network Ltd
- **You can** also use Parcel Force and Royal Mail online services to get mail to BFPO Northolt.

# What can I send?

Guidance on what can be sent internationally by mail is found [here](#) and as general rule **you must not** send via BFPO mail:

- alcoholic beverages
- arms and ammunition
- batteries (check further guidance)
- Christmas crackers
- financial documents that could have a consequential loss if delayed or lost in post. (Does not include bank statements & bank cards etc)
- fragile items
- indecent, obscene, or offensive articles
- prescription medicines and drugs sent for scientific purposes
- pressurised containers (including aerosols like deodorants and shaving foams or gels)
- sharp objects and instruments (including scissors and kitchen knives or utensils)

# How to Prepare your Mail for BFPO Processing and Onward Delivery

## Private Customers – Posting Items Over a UK Post Office/Forces Post Office Counter

- Standard/large letters or correspondence **do not** need a completed customs form (CN22/CN23).
- For all other (small packets/parcels), **you must** attach a completed customs form (CN22/CN23). BFPO customers can view Royal Mail guidance on international mail customs declarations [here](#), which also includes a video guide on how to complete customs declaration forms.
- Private customers **can also** prepare and print their customs form before visiting the Post Office/Forces Post Office by following the guidance [here](#). Post Office Ltd are in the process of updating this application to make it compatible to use on android devices and BFPO will update customers once this work is complete.
- Private customers posting items over a Post Office Counter should be aware that use of Harmonised System Codes on private mail is increasing and where possible **you should** add these to your customs declaration. Information regarding Harmonised System Codes and how to look them up can be found [here](#).
- **Always** provide a return address, including full name and postcode. Simply adding from Mum, Dad or Grandparents isn't enough to allow BFPO to return mail and in most cases will result in the item being processed for disposal.
- **You should**, use printed address labels as they are easily read by BFPO automated sorting systems and reduce risk of items being delayed.
- If you are handwriting your address, **always** write recipient/return addresses clearly in block capital letters.
- **Never** include destination country within the BFPO address and **always** use a standard BFPO address:

SERVICE NUMBER, RANK/TITLE, and NAME  
UNIT or REGIMENT or HM SHIP  
OPERATION (if deployed)

BFPO Number & Postcode

### **Business Customers – UK Retail Sector**

- In addition to the addressing guidance above, Business customers **must** always attach a customs declaration or commercial invoice to BFPO items. All classes of BFPO mail are destined for overseas delivery.
- Business customers **should always** include Harmonised System Codes as part of the customs declaration. Information regarding Harmonised System Codes and how to look them up can be found [here](#).

# What if I use the Post Office/Forces Post Office or Place an Order Online?

- **Always** ensure you take out the appropriate level of item compensation that matches the value of the contents.
- **Always** request and keep a proof of posting or your invoice/purchase email until your item is delivered, you will need that in the rare event of submitting a claim for loss/damage.
- **Never** pay international mail rates as all BFPO mail should be priced using UK Inland First-Class rates which are considerably cheaper (current BFPO postage tariffs are found [here](#)).
- If your item qualifies for the Enduring Families Free Mail Service (operational free mail up to 2Kg), **you are advised to** keep the value of your item below £30.00 and **always** declare all items/values and tick the 'gift' box on the customs declaration form. Gift items **not exceeding** £30.00 in value will in the majority of cases be below International Mail gift allowance rates which negate any import taxation being applied to your mail item before it is delivered.
- Forces Free Air Letters (Blueys) **should always** be available at your local post office on request.
- **Always** report Post Office/Forces Post Office Branches that don't facilitate the above guidance to BFPO Service Desk/Customer Enquiries and BFPO **will** report all incidents to Post Office Ltd or take steps to rectify any issues originating within the Forces Post Office network.



# Enquiries and Contacts

**Enquiries/Claims – If your mail has not arrived within 30 working days of posting, then you should:**

- If at a BFPO location, contact the Forces Post Office staff who will advise what course of action to take and assist with compiling claim forms, ensuring that the necessary evidence is attached to the claims form.
- If you are in UK collect a lost or damaged claim form from your local Post Office and once complete ensure that the necessary evidence is attached to the claims form.
- Normally the sender of the mail should initiate claims for lost mail and the recipient for damaged mail.
- For goods purchased from commercial companies (mail order/on-line shopping) the commercial company holds the contract with BFPO and must initiate the claims procedure; customers must contact the company to initiate the process.
- Ensure you have the correct amount of compensation for the value of the goods being sent, basic cover included in the postage cost is for Royal Mail a maximum of £20 per mail item and Parcelforce £100 per mail item; if your goods are valued in excess of these amounts you should always purchase the extra compensation or you will not be able to recover the full cost during any claim.

## Contacts

[desbfpo-enquiries@mod.gov.uk](mailto:desbfpo-enquiries@mod.gov.uk)

Telephone: +44 (0)345 769 7978 (calls are charged at local rate in the UK)

Alternative: +44 (0)20 8589 3450 (civil) or 94676 3450 (military) Monday to Thursday, 8am to 3:30pm (except bank holidays) Friday, 8am to 2:30pm (except bank holidays)

Fax: +44 (0)20 8589 3309

BFPO Enquiries

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BFPO is also on: [Twitter](#) , [Facebook](#)