A guide to keeping deliveries on track during eCommerce peaks

A toolkit for small businesses

Australia Post

Contents

A guide to keeping deliveries on track
during eCommerce peaks

This toolkit is provided for general information purposes only
and is not intended to be specific advice for your business needs

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Partnering for peak online shopping events

When's the busiest time for your business? The Australian eCommerce retail calendar has changed over the past few years, and with 3.4 million Australian households now shopping online at least fortnightly,[1] customer shopping activity is getting harder to predict.

Sudden eCommerce surges can make doing business harder than it needs to be. That's why we're partnering with businesses like yours to help you plan ahead, stay on top of the rush and deliver better for customers throughout the year.

How are we doing this? By setting out everything you need to successfully navigate peak eCommerce periods, in our handy guide. Whether you need to take the frenzy out of Click Frenzy or streamline everyday fulfilment, we can help.

This toolkit covers every stage of the process, from preparing labels and parcel lodgement, to offering tracking and notifications via the AusPost app and tips for sending internationally.

We're supporting your planning and logistics too, with advice for last sending dates, a calendar of key eCommerce events and monthly industry updates so you can stay ahead of the surge.

With checklists, useful stats and expert advice, we're giving retailers the power to tackle eCommerce peaks with confidence; it's just another way we're delivering for business like never before.

"Australia Post is committed to supporting your business through its busiest periods and helping to get your products into customers' hands as quickly as possible."

GARY STARR
EXECUTIVE GENERAL MANAGER, CUSTOMER AND COMMERCIAL

Your must-have tools for successful peak online shopping periods

Managing peak demand web page	Parcel labelling, packaging, manifesting and sorting videos
eCommerce Sales Calendar	Australia Post 2022 Online Shopping Report
Domestic updates page	Australia Post Delivery Experience Report 2021
International updates page	5-Point Supply Chain Fitness Check
International Post Guide	**Follow us on LinkedIn for the latest network updates and online shopping insights.**

1. Australia Post Inside Australian Online Shopping Report, 2022

> "Tracking numbers are automatically sent to customers, which has reduced the number of customer enquiries we receive."
>
> KAREN PRAHIN AT
> EDEN HEALTH FOODS

Your eCommerce Checklist

Improve your customers' checkout experience

Have 'order by' dates visible on your website and within your customer communications.

Update your website messaging with estimated delivery times.

Have a clear returns policy and make it easy to find on your website.

Offer a choice of standard and express delivery speeds.

Make it clear in your shopping cart that you send with Australia Post – this gives your customers the confidence to use their Parcel Collect address, PO Box or Parcel Locker address.

Use an address validator to make sure address data is accurate.

Allow customers to select 'Safe Drop' as their delivery preference to have their parcel left in a safe place.

Ask for customer mobile number and email address at the checkout for automated tracking via SMS/email and any address query resolution.

Australia Post fulfilment and freight preparation

Integrate your MyPost Business account with an eCommerce Platform Partner to help save time and simplify your parcel processes.

Integrate your parcel services contract with shipping and tracking APIs to automate and customise your workflow.

Purchase your packaging essentials in bulk to avoid running out.

Make sure your packaging is sturdy and won't tear or break easily.

Use packaging that fits closely to the shape, weight, and size of your items.

Check package, size dimensions and weight are accurate and within our limits.

Check your labels are printed clearly and are scannable.

Sort items by speed i.e. Express Post from Parcel Post, and then by size i.e. small from large.

Set up processes and schedules for parcel pick-ups, drop offs and lodgement.

Accurately lodge your manifests at the same time as your items.

Your eCommerce Checklist

International fulfilment and freight preparation

Check the available services for the destinations you're sending to.

Have international 'order by' dates visible on your website and within your customer communications.

Check package, size dimensions and weight are accurate and within our international limits.

Ensure you declare what the item is and what material it's made of in the content description, including the HS tariff code where possible to avoid delays.*

Lodge your manifest at the same time as when your items are handed over to Australia Post.

Familiarise yourself with destination-specific estimated delivery time frames.

Be transparent with your customers and communicate any delivery delays.

StarTrack freight preparation and delivery

Organise your scheduled collections and any additional collections as early as possible.

If sending high volumes, provide freight pre-sorted in State breaks.

Use good quality labels and apply them to the flat side of the carton avoiding wrinkles.

Label your break bulk pallets correctly with labels on all sides.

Manifest your parcel data on collection — send data daily and on time.

Accurately declare freight measurements and weight in line with Chain of Responsibility requirements.

Familiarise yourself with StarTrack merchant and customer support channels and opening hours.

Give authority to leave where appropriate and safe to do so.

Give your customers a great delivery experience

Encourage customers to download the AusPost App for all parcel tracking in one place.

Offer Australia Post Collection Points for customers to select delivery to a Post Office, Parcel Locker, PO Box and 240+ retail partners.

Automate your tracking.

Include the most up-to-date delivery information on your website.

Ensure your customer support information is easy to find on your website.

Familiarise yourself with Australia Post's support channels and hours.

Register for, or log in to the Merchant Portal to access the Business Support Portal (BSP), and use the customer query resolution features available (parcel services and StarTrack contract customers only).

Have a customer-friendly parcel returns solution.

* More countries are making HS tariff codes mandatory, such as Ireland which requires a 10 digit HS code on all items.

Key eCommerce sale dates

Plan ahead for the biggest online shopping days in the calendar and be prepared for business peaks so you can deliver with confidence for your customers. These are just some of the major annual eCommerce events, click here to see the full calendar.

New Year sales	Afterpay Day	Mother's Day	Amazon Prime Day	Father's Day	Cyber Weekend	Super Saturday

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December

Valentine's Day	Click Frenzy Mayhem	Afterpay Day	Click Frenzy Main Event	Christmas Day
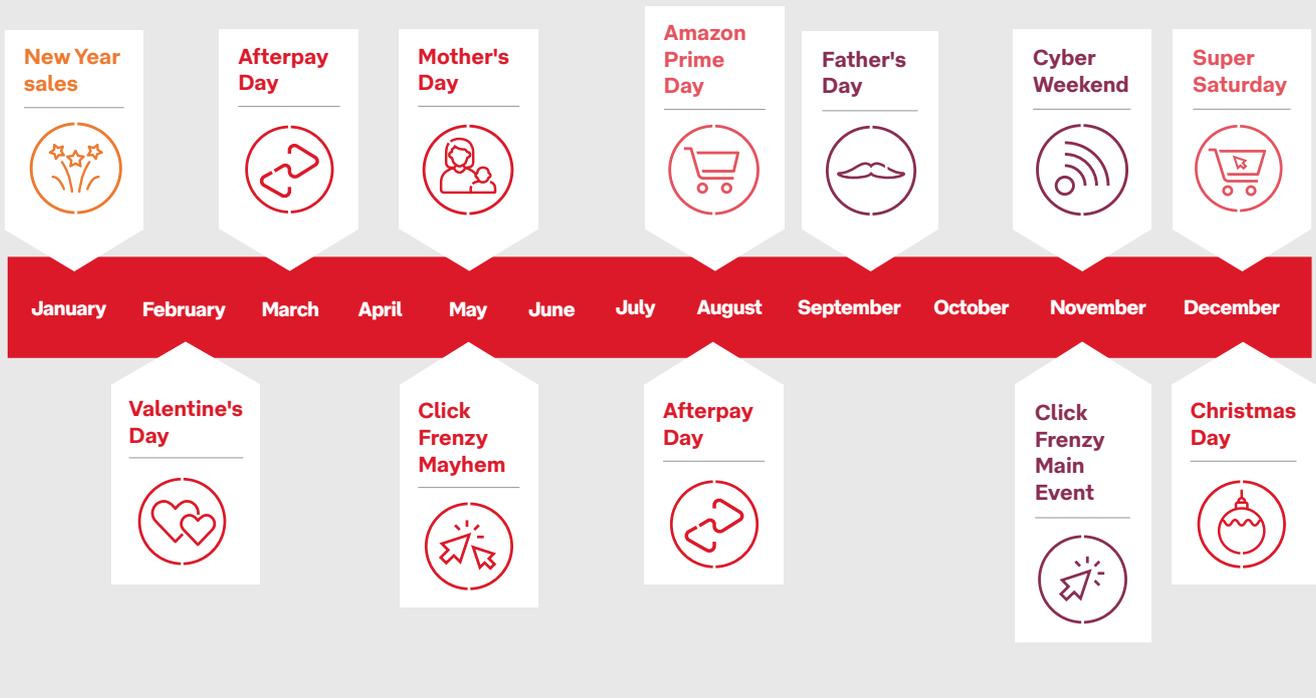
Help us support you and your customers

To save you time during busy online shopping periods, here are some self-service tools you can access to help resolve queries:

MyPost Business customers

Chat with a member of our team using the 'Support' tab in the MyPost Business portal.$ You can also create an enquiry online or get phone support if you prefer to speak with someone.

Parcel services customers

The Business Support Portal (BSP) is the fastest way to log an enquiry on behalf of your customers. It can also help you quickly and easily manage queries such as tracking and parcel redirection. Access it via the Merchant Portal.

StarTrack customers

myStarTrack Online allows you to manage all your parcels and freight, pick-up bookings and Track & Trace. Encourage customers to track their items using our Track & Trace tool and for all other enquiries, call StarTrack on 13 23 45.

$ Live chat is available Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm AEST.

Handy hint

Our BSP chatbot can help you resolve customer queries even faster.

"One thing I'm sure of, is free returns has definitely provided a better shopping experience for our customers, and our number one goal above all else is to provide a great experience for them."

TIM MCFADYEN,
DIRECTOR AT THATSSOFETCH

Six ways to deliver a great customer experience

1 Give customers choice of delivery speed

Sending within Australia?
Try offering Express Post alongside Parcel Post by adding a check box or drop-down menu at checkout.

Sending overseas?
Try offering International Express alongside International Standard for customers who need items delivered sooner.

Visit our website for the latest service updates

Six ways to deliver a great customer experience

2 Make your returns policy and process clear

The delivery experience doesn't stop at the delivery. Your returns process is just as important as the purchase process to help ensure happy customers.

Consider extending your returns period for the holiday season.

Review your returns process – do you offer a customer-friendly returns process?

Make your returns information easy to find on your website.

Visit our website to learn more about our Return services.

Find out how free returns helped That's So Fetch to boost both customer satisfaction and average order value.

Handy hint

Use Express Post tape on your parcels being sent Express to ensure they stand out during sorting, and get to your customers as quickly as possible.

41%

of consumers have abandoned a retailer following a poor returns experience.[2]

Customers told us their biggest barrier to returns was that it was too much effort to organise.[3]

2. Making the Difference -ShipStation Returns Report 2022
3. Australia Post Parcel Receiver Survey, n=612, May 2021

Six ways to deliver a great customer experience

3 Use address validation tools

Say goodbye to incorrectly labelled parcels by adding address validation tools to your eCommerce platform.

Address validations tools can help you:

- ✓ Reduce print wastage.
- ✓ Provide a good customer delivery experience.
- ✓ Reduce excess delivery costs and returned articles.
- ✓ Save time managing less customer queries.

4 Offer Collection Points[#]

With over 47 million parcels sent to an Australia Post Collection Point in FY22,[4] it's important to offer customers the option of Collection Points at checkout. There are over 5,000 locations across Australia where customers can choose to have their items delivered to:

- **A Post Office**
- **24/7 Parcel Locker**[%]
- **PO Box**
- **240+ retail partners including supermarkets and pharmacies, or**
- **Left in a safe place at their home by selecting 'Safe Drop'.**[^]

Offering Collection Points is simple:

At checkout let customers know they can have their parcel delivered to an Australia Post Collection Point. →	Customers download the AusPost app, sign up for a MyPost account, and create a Collection Point delivery address. →	Customers enter their Collection Point address into the delivery address field at checkout. →	Use the customer's preferred delivery address on the delivery label and lodge it with Australia Post. ✓

Offering Collection Points can help you increase first time delivery and NPS.[5]

4. Australia Post Collection Points Dashboard, June 2022
5. The Delivery Experience: Getting it right. Why it matters And how data can help. Australia Post, 2021
Terms and conditions apply. Collection time limits apply. Items must be lodged with Australia Post to be delivered to a participating Post Office. Trading hours may vary. You have 10 business days to collect your parcel once it has arrived at a Parcel Collect (Post Office) location. Post Offices will accept parcels up to 22kg and not greater than 105cm in one dimension. Letters and standard mail that can be delivered to your letterbox, including Express Post letters, will not be accepted. Please refer to the full terms and conditions.
^ Terms and Conditions apply. The service is only available for deliveries to an address that is accessible and to a requested delivery location where it is safe to leave parcels. View full terms and conditions.
% Terms and conditions apply. You have 48 hours to collect your parcel once it has arrived at a Parcel Locker. Please see the full terms and conditions.

> "If customers place an order in the morning and see that it ships that afternoon, it helps us with customer retention and satisfaction."
>
> ADAM KERRINS,
> OWNER AT THE SCENT LAB

Six ways to deliver a great customer experience

5 Set realistic customer expectations for delivery times

Give your customers confidence by setting clear expectations around estimated parcel arrival time up-front.

Be as clear as you can about timing. Make delivery time and sending date information is easy to find on your website and in your communications.

Allow time for your pick and pack processes, not just Australia Post's delivery time frame.

Consider last lodgement dates when planning your sales promotions to ensure customers receive their items on time.

Be open and honest with customers around service impacts. Keep on top of domestic and international delivery time estimates.

57%
of survey respondents said certainty around when their delivery would arrive was more important than getting it quickly.[6]

Six ways to deliver a great customer experience

6 Encourage customers to manage their deliveries via the AusPost app

Parcel tracking adds another layer of confidence for customers, particularly during busy online shopping periods, where we see increased parcel volumes coming through our network.

The AusPost app allows customers to track all their deliveries in one place – and select delivery preferences such as Safe Drop.^^ It's as simple as downloading the app and signing up for a MyPost account.

Encouraging your customers to download the AusPost app can help you:

Reduce calls to your customer service teams – customers can raise enquiries with Australia Post directly via the app.

Provide an improved customer experience by increasing first time delivery when consumers use the app to select a delivery preference e.g. Safe Drop.

Handy hint

Check out how you can promote the AusPost app to your customers.

To give customers visibility on where their items are, make sure you capture their email address and mobile number to automate email/SMS tracking notifications for deliveries within Australia.

6. Consumer Parcel Receivers Survey, AP, 2022
^^ Terms and conditions apply. The option to have parcel left in a safe place will only be available if the sender has agreed to allow it. This applies to parcels in transit and addressed to a street address. Additionally, the shipping information provided by the sender must include registered email address, mobile number, or other details that allow us to match the parcel to the receiver's MyPost account.

Your guide to parcel sending

Check your parcel sizes and weights

Start planning your parcel packaging limits now to help save you time – and costs – when things get busy.

Australia Post cannot accept parcels over 113cm,[†] and the maximum physical parcel weight is 22kg.

[†] Parcels with lengths between 100cm and 113cm will incur a <u>Manual Handling Surcharge (MHS)</u> Surcharge applies only to domestic parcels. Charges can be found on your Rate Card. Parcels must not exceed 0.25 cubic metres e.g. (L) 70 x (W) 60 x (H) 59.5 x 250 = 62.5kg = 0.25m

Australia Post domestic size and weight guidelines

	Retail and MyPost Business	Parcel services customers
Max. (Dead) Weight	22kg	22kg
Max. Length	105cm	113cm[†]
Max. Cubic Metre	0.25m	0.25m

Stock up on suitable packaging

Now's the time to stock up on all the packaging you'll need during busy online shopping peaks. You can supply your own, or use Australia Post packaging available at your local <u>Post Office</u> or <u>online</u>.

Here are a few tips if you're using your own packaging:

Boxes are a sturdy option, and their flat surfaces make labelling and scanning easy.

If your items require addition protection while in transit, try a 'box in box' method. Wrap individual items with a cushioning material and use a filler or padding material between boxes.

For satchels, place your label in the middle of the satchel on a flat surface and avoid overfilling.

Opt for matte packaging with bright or light colours and avoid glossy or slippery packaging. Parcels can slip off conveyor belts and sorting machines can find shiny or dark packaging harder to read.

Ensure your packaging fits closely to the item you're sending, particularly for international deliveries where plane cargo space is limited.

Watch our helpful video on <u>packaging</u>

A guide to keeping deliveries on track during eCommerce peaks

Handy hint

An integration can help you save hours every week when it comes to things like label printing or returns.

"Integrating our eCommerce platform has streamlined labelling and sending processes, which saves so much time – especially during peak periods."

BEC CONNOLLY,
FOUNDER AT BOTANICALS BY LUXE

Your guide to parcel sending

Print clear, high-quality labels

- Print labels on matte white paper with black ink.

- Make sure the barcode and address are clear and visible.

- Include a Smart Barcode with a Delivery Point Identifier or DPID (optional for Australia Post parcels only).

Correctly apply labels to your items

- Place the label on the largest, flattest surface of your parcel.

- Make sure it's not wrapped around any edges, or positioned over a flap or seam.

- Check the label is not covered by strapping or tape.

- Avoid shiny plastic, such as plastic sleeves or letter windows – reflective materials make it harder for labels to be scanned.

Watch our helpful video on labelling
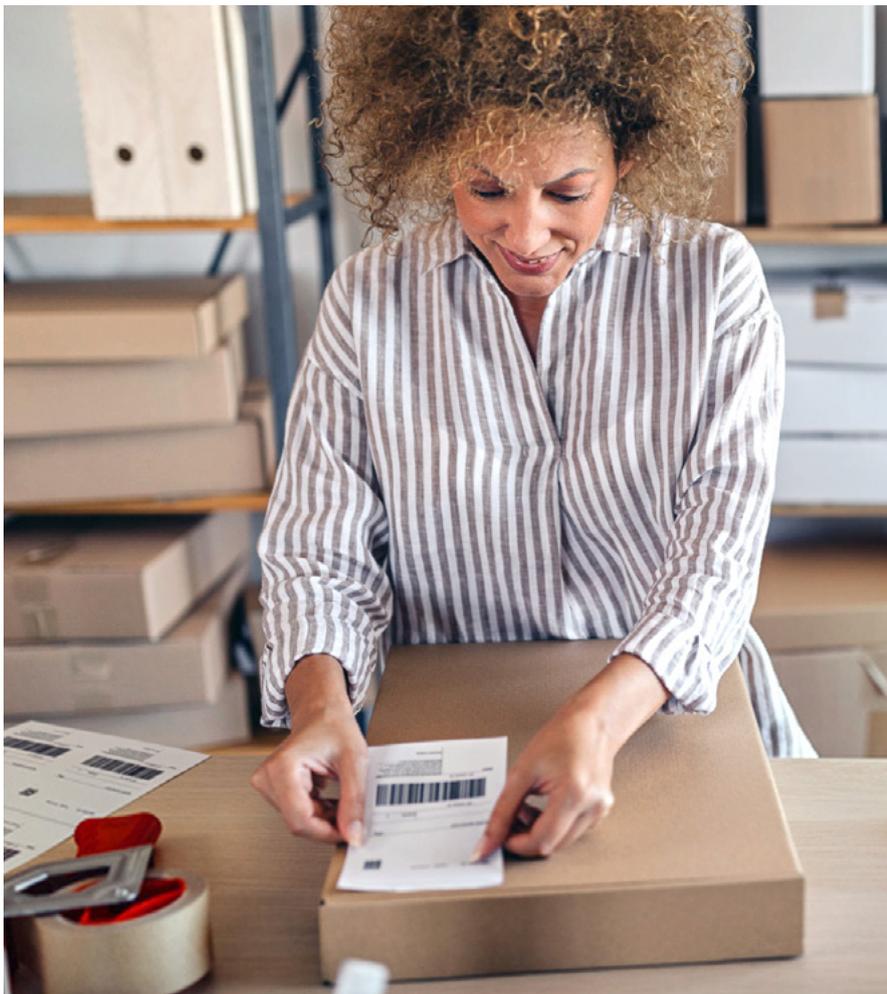
Correct and incorrect labelling

✓ **Correct**

✗ Strapping over the top

✗ Sticky tape over label

✗ Wrapped over an edge

✗ Over a fold

Your guide to parcel sending

Sort your parcels by speed and size

To help parcels get to their destination as quickly as possible and minimise delays, please sort your items by:

Speed
i.e. Express Post from Parcel Post.

Size
i.e. small parcels from large parcels.

Watch our helpful video on parcel sorting

Manifest your parcels on time

Manifesting your parcels too early or too late can derail a great customer experience.

If you've booked a parcel pickup, make sure you submit your manifest when the driver collects your items.

Manifests trigger a tracking notification to your customer. Send the data too early and you risk setting unrealistic customer delivery expectations. Send it too late and Australia Post will need to enter the data manually — which means automated sortation is not available, potentially causing parcel delays.

Watch our helpful video on parcel manifesting

7. The Delivery Experience: Getting it right. Why it matters And how data can help. Australia Post, 2021
8. Australia Post Consumer Segmentation,Wave 2 Aug 2021
9. Australia Post Strategic NPS Program Nov 2021
~ Carbon offset for international parcel deliveries is to the international hub only.

Spotlight on sustainability

68%
of shoppers want packaging made with recycled content.[7]

3 in 4
Australians consider some element of sustainability when they shop online.[8]

70%
of businesses agree it's important to their customers that they are environmentally responsible.[9]

Did you know?

- Parcel postage paid via the Post Office, Online Shop, or MyPost Business account is carbon neutral.~

- All Australia Post plastic satchels contain recycled content.

- Consumers can recycle their plastic satchels via 1,800+ REDcycle bins nationwide.

Handy hint

Wondering what your business can do to be more sustainable? Read our 10 step guide.

> "We aim to pack and send all orders within 24 hours, and do all that we can to ensure a positive customer experience."
>
> BRONWYN PAPANTONIO,
> CO-FOUNDER AT
> THE MATERNITY MARKET

Sending to customers around the globe

Online selling opens up businesses to the entire world. And with international online shopping events and the holiday season fast approaching, here are some tips to help your parcels arrive at their destination as soon as possible.

Australia Post International size and weight guidelines

20kg	105cm	140cm
Max. (Dead) Weight	Max. Length	Max girth (Height + Width) x 2

Key tips when sending overseas

Bring your sales promotions forward to encourage customers to order early. This will help ensure that parcels arrive at their destination on time.

Lodge your items using either a digital lodgement platform or submit parcel information using the online Customs Declaration form – this can save time and ensure a smooth delivery process.

Make sure your item descriptions and HS tariff codes on your customs forms are in line with the Australia Post requirements.

Manifest your items on time (not required for MyPost Business). To avoid items being sent back, you must submit your manifest on or before lodgement.

Your must-have international tools and guides

International export tools help you classify your goods easily and accurately, and understand taxes and duties that may be charged at destination Customs.[‡]

International postal guide. Check the rules and guidelines for sending to a particular destination so your item can get there without delay.

While we have dedicated freight planes during peaks, we still rely on passenger flights to transport our parcels, and many domestic and international routes are still experiencing the impacts of COVID-19. Please make sure to check each destination's delivery time frame to set the right customer expectations.

Top three international parcel destinations for Australian businesses:

New Zealand

USA

United Kingdom

Our website contains up to date recommended lodgement dates for certain peak periods.

Handy hint

Compact packaging means more of your items can fit on planes. This improves the end-to-end delivery speed – meaning more happy customers!

[‡] Only available to parcel services customers using an enabled 3rd party platform or direct API.

Sending parcels and freight with StarTrack

StarTrack Road Express˜
20kg Max. (Dead) Weight
117cm Max. Length
60cm Max. Width
60cm Max. Height

StarTrack Premium˜
22kg Max. (Dead) Weight
100cm Max. Length
60cm Max. Width
60cm Max. Height

Pallet Presentation

When preparing your pallets, please ensure:

The correct weight is recorded and is aligned to a manifest. Pallet dead weight must be less than 800kg.

Freight is appropriately restrained and confined within the dimensions of the pallet, with pallets wrapped for transport and labelled on all five sides.

The pallet is in a serviceable condition, suitable for transport with maximum dimensions of 1.7m x 1.7m x 1.8m.

For single cartons with dead weight greater than 32kgs, please brick-lay cartons (overlapping) when stacking on the pallet.

Please visit the website to keep up-to-date with StarTrack sending dates

~ A Manual Handling Surcharge will apply to any item that is incompatible with, or which cannot be safely sorted on our automatic sorting machines, and which exceeds the StarTrack Road Express or StarTrack Premium size and weight dimensions. Please note that any incompatible packaging items purchased from Australia Post sent via StarTrack will incur a Manual Handling Surcharge. An Oversize Charge will be applied instead of the Manual Handling Surcharge for items falling within the oversize ranges listed in the StarTrack Oversize guide.

Top three tips for StarTrack presentation:

1. Use high quality barcodes
Test-print your labels.
Barcodes need to be:

- Crisp
- Not faded
- Free from other markings and smudges
- Aligned to fit on the label

2. Place your labels correctly

- Keep labels flat
- Don't apply labels over corners
- Make sure labels don't have creases

3. Prior to pickup, transfer your data.
This is critical – we need your manifest data so we can:

- Sort,
- scan,
- dispatch, and
- trace your parcels.

Together we'll get your parcels delivered safely and on-time.
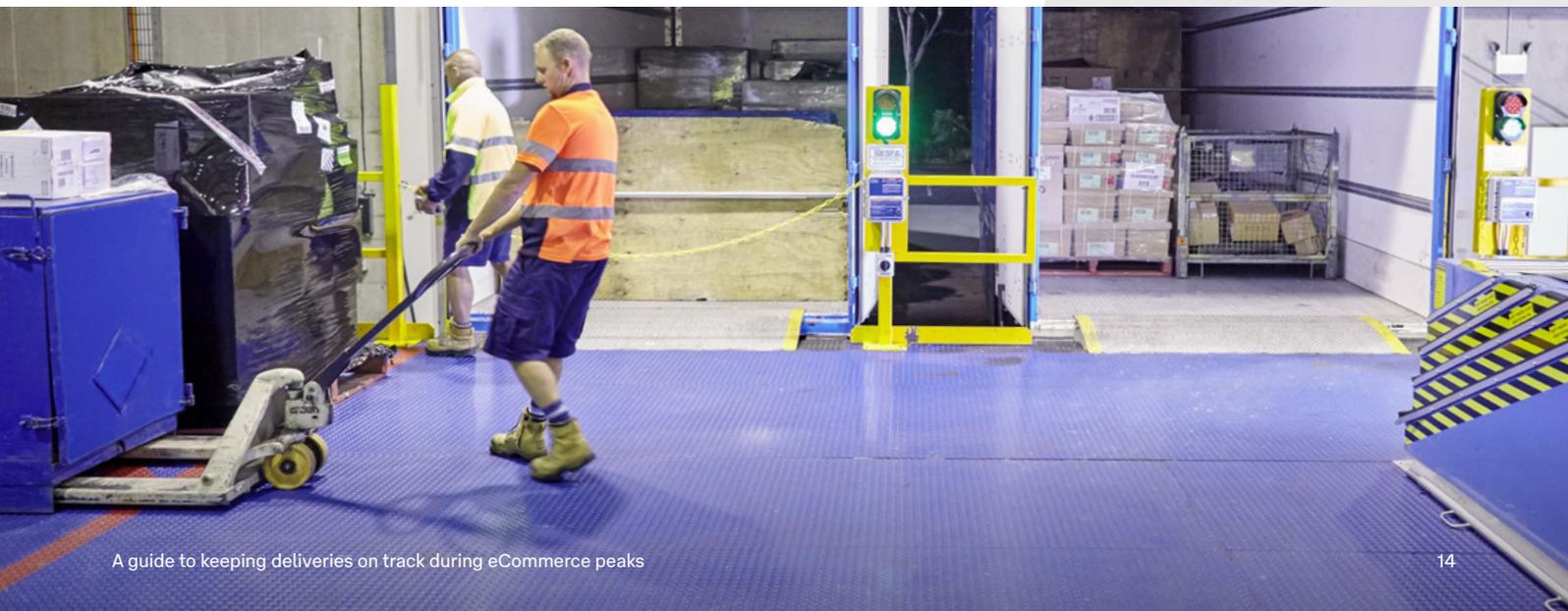
Sending parcels and freight with StarTrack

Key tips for StarTrack freight presentation:

Communicate your parcel volume estimates and any volume spikes with StarTrack as early as possible.

For items over 20kg, please place a 'Heavy' sticker on the parcel, and ensure that you accurately record the weight in your manifest and consignment label.

For items over 32kg, please secure it to a pallet or skid for handling by Load Shifting Equipment (LSE).

Use suitable packaging that's sturdy and fit for transportation of your goods.

Include accurate documentation with your freight, including Dangerous Goods status and mass.

Ensure your freight is ready for collection at the specified collection time.

StarTrack 'Heavy' sticker sample:

Important: items that are sent through without a manifest will be held from delivery until a manifest is received.

Examples of correct and incorrect labelling

| ✓ Correct | ✗ Creased label | ✗ Smudged print | ✗ Wraps corner | ✗ Covered |
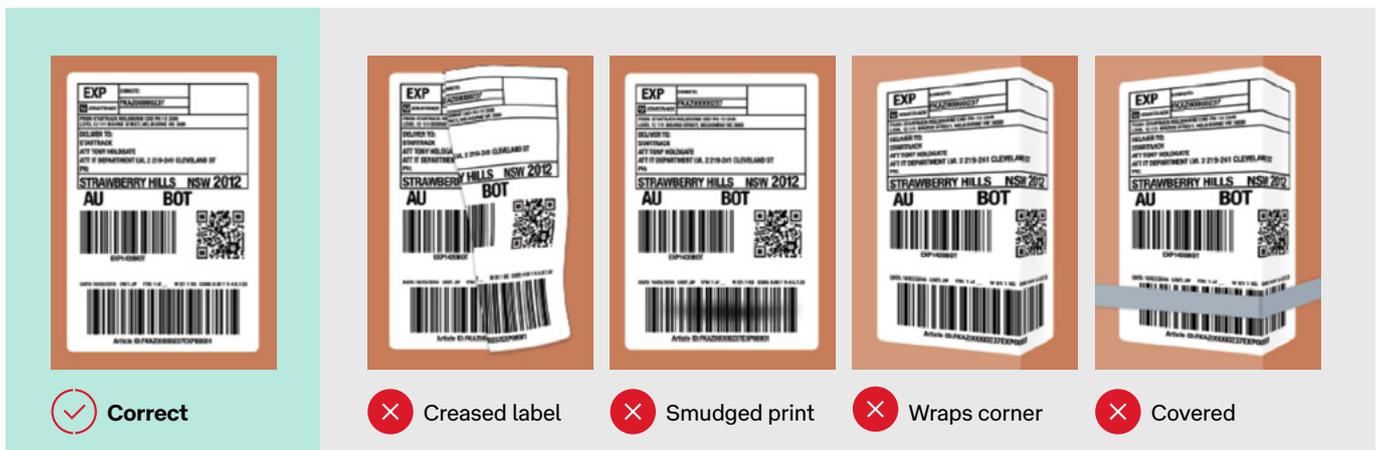
Your guide to parcel returns

With Australia Post you can choose from three <u>return solutions</u>[+]:

'Go Online' returns
Customers can self-serve through a co-branded online portal, and print their return label at home, at a Post Office, or retail partner.

'Label Provided' returns
Simply provide a return label inside the parcel and only pay return shipping if the item is returned.

'Contact You' returns
Email your customer a return label after they make contact with you – and arrange for collection if needed (ideal for large or bulky items).**

Customer features	'Go Online' returns	'Label Provided' returns	'Contact You' returns**
Tracking available via auspost.com.au	✓	✓	✓
Pre-printed return label included in outbound shipment		✓	
Printer-less returns, and print at the Post Office or retail partner	✓	✓	✓
Lodge return at a growing network of retail partners, many open late 7-days a week	✓		
Lodge return at any Post Office, Street Posting Box, or 24/7 Parcel Locker	✓	✓	✓
Return collected from customer location			✓
Receive a receipt with tracking details when return is lodged at a Post Office	✓		✓

41%
of consumers have abandoned a retailer following a poor returns experience.[10]

70%
of online shoppers prefer to return an item at the Post Office.[11]

Handy hint

Want to offer your customers an easy way to return unwanted items?

If you have a parcel services contract, you can register now for a returns portal.

Give your customers access to an unrivalled and growing network of convenient drop off points via a simple returns portal.

20,000+
Parcel drop off points

15,300+
Street Posting Boxes

250
Retail partner locations including supermarkets and pharmacies

4,300+
Post Offices and Business Centres

650+
24/7 Parcel Lockers

** Metro locations only (we send via courier who then brings to nearest parcel facility which allows the parcel to flow through our parcel network)
10. Parcel Receiver Survey, February 2021, n=2,277
11. Making the Difference -ShipStation Returns Report 2022
+ The Easy Returns service is only available for domestic parcels. The service is only available for parcel services customers and isn't available for Parcel Post and Express Post prepaid satchels. Standard postage rates apply.
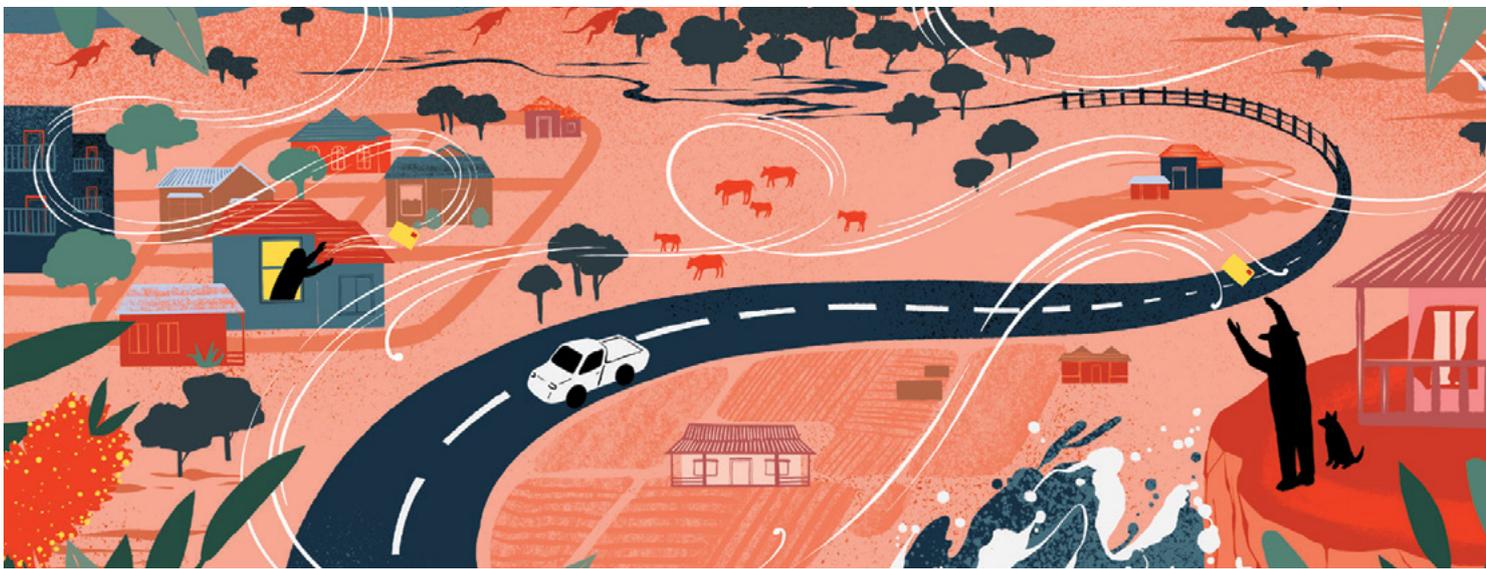
About Australia Post.

We are making it easier for you to connect with your customers, and find new ones both here and overseas. Through our suite of eCommerce driven logistics, supply chain and parcel delivery solutions, we can help you to provide seamless online shopping experiences, from checkout to delivery.

If you have any questions about this toolkit or you would like to know more, please contact your Australia Post Account Manager.

If you don't have an Account Manager, please call 13 11 18 and one of our friendly staff will assist you.

This report is provided for general information purposes only and is not intended to be specific advice for your business.

When we connect, we feel better.

Looking after your mental health and wellbeing during busy times is important. Below are some quick tips from our partner Beyond Blue:

Stay connected.
Spending time with friends and family is good for you, and for them. Why not write a letter, send a text, or make a call?

Reduce stress.
It's important to keep an eye out for stress and to find healthy, practical ways to manage it.

Keep active.
Exercise is great for your mental health. Choosing something with a social element that you really enjoy is ideal.

Sleep well.
Quality sleep helps you better manage your emotions. Aim for six to eight hours and avoid devices before bed.

To access free mental health information, advice and support, visit beyondblue.org.au or call Beyond Blue on 1300 22 4636.

Proud partner **Beyond Blue**

Australia Post acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we operate, live and gather as a team. We recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

Australia Post