5 Shipping Mistakes New eBay Sellers Make

FREE RESELLER GUIDE | Reseller Traffic Lab

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Read the web guide for current information

Quick answer: Shipping decisions start with a realistic packed weight and dimensions. Then compare the buyer's total, your likely label cost and the margin you need to protect.

Shipping mistakes can eat your profit



Use this visual as a reminder. The five fixes and shipping-method comparison are explained below.

Five common mistakes and practical fixes

1. **Offering free shipping before checking the cost .** Free shipping means the buyer does not see a separate shipping charge; it does not remove the postage expense. Estimate the likely mailing cost and decide whether the total price can cover it while remaining competitive.

2. **Using the item's weight instead of the packed weight .** Estimate the weight of the item with the mailer or box, padding, tape and other packing materials. The product by itself is not the package the carrier will price.

3. **Guessing the final box dimensions .** Measure the box you expect to use. Package dimensions can affect the charge, and an unnecessarily large box may cost more than its scale weight suggests.

4. **Testing only the cheapest destination .** If you plan to include shipping in the item price, compare several destinations you actually serve. A nearby estimate may not represent what a farther buyer will cost to reach.

5. **Choosing a shipping service before checking the packed item .** Compare eligible services after you have a reasonable packed weight, dimensions and destination. Check delivery expectations, package rules and the label price rather than selecting by habit.

Free shipping versus calculated shipping

Neither choice is automatically best for every item. Compare the total the buyer sees with the amount you expect to pay for the label.

Approach	What the buyer sees	What the seller manages	May fit when
Free shipping	No separate shipping charge	Build a realistic expected shipping expense into a competitive total	The packed cost is predictable enough for the seller to absorb across likely destinations
Calculated shipping	A charge based on location and the package details supplied	Enter an accurate package type, packed weight, dimensions, service and ship-from location	Cost varies meaningfully by destination, weight or package size
Flat or separate shipping	A shipping amount set by the seller	Choose an amount that reflects realistic costs without disguising the buyer's total	The seller can estimate a workable charge and wants it shown separately

Simple comparison: a $30 item plus $8 shipping and a $38 item with free shipping both total $38 before tax. The wording changes; the postage expense does not disappear. Check the current fee rules for your account and category when comparing what you may keep.

Calculated shipping uses the buyer's location and the package information you provide. It is only as useful as those inputs. An incorrect weight or box size can still produce an incorrect charge.

A quick before-you-list workflow

1. Choose the likely mailer or box and the protection the item needs.
2. Estimate the complete packed weight, including packaging.
3. Measure the outside of the likely finished package.
4. Compare suitable services and several destinations when the cost may vary.
5. Compare the buyer's total with similar sold and active listings.
6. Choose free, calculated or flat shipping deliberately and record the assumption.

Before you buy the label

Pack the sold item securely, then weigh and measure the final package. Confirm the address, service and package details on the order before purchasing the label. If the actual package differs from your estimate, use the final measurements rather than the listing assumption.

Official references

- eBay: Setting up your shipping options - fixed, calculated and seller-paid shipping choices.
- eBay: Using the shipping calculator - package type, dimensions, weight and buyer location.
- eBay: Shipping rates for sellers - allowing for packaging and using calculated shipping.
- eBay Seller Center: Packaging and measuring - why both weight and dimensions matter.

Shipping services, rates and eBay tools can change. Check the current listing flow and carrier requirements before relying on a quote.

Reseller Traffic Lab
Practical help for eBay sellers.
https://resellertrafficlab.com/free-resources/ebay-shipping-mistakes-guide