BILL'S HOME TECH
Home & Small Business Tech Solutions

BILL'S COMPLETE MANUALS

USPS Informed Delivery & Package Tracking

See what's coming, steer your deliveries, and spot the fake delivery texts

A plain-English guide to USPS, UPS, FedEx and Amazon deliveries

Take your time — you can't break it

Written for you by Bill — Bill's Home Tech

(330) 200-8042 · BillsHomeTech.com

For USPS, UPS, FedEx and Amazon · facts current November 2026

What's Inside

This is your guide to knowing what's on the way, steering your deliveries, and never being fooled by a fake delivery text. Read it in any order and at your own pace. Every feature comes with what it actually does *for you*, and slow step-by-step directions anyone can follow. If a screen looks a little different on yours, the idea is still the same.

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PART 1

Getting Started

Who brings your packages, what a tracking number really is, and the one habit that keeps you safe from every fake delivery message. Start here.

CHAPTER 1

A Note from Bill

Hello, and welcome. If you've ever stood at the window wondering whether a package will show up today, or stared at a text that says your parcel is "on hold," this guide is for you.

I'm Bill. I've spent more than 30 years helping people with their technology here in Portage County, Ohio. If you've ever asked yourself *"Is this delivery message real?"*, you're asking exactly the right question. Packages are part of everyday life now: prescriptions, gifts from the grandkids, things ordered online. The scammers know that too, and fake delivery texts are among the most common tricks going.

What this guide will do for you

- Show you the **free tools** the Post Office, UPS and FedEx offer, so you can see what's coming before it arrives.
- Walk you through **holding your mail**, **rescheduling a missed delivery** and **sending a package somewhere safer**, one slow step at a time.
- Teach you to spot a **fake delivery text or email** in seconds, and what to do with it.
- Give you simple ways to keep packages from walking off your porch.

> **WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU**
>
> **Knowing what's coming takes the worry away**
>
> When you can look at your own mail and package list each morning, you stop wondering. A surprise text claiming a package is stuck loses all its power, because you can check the real thing yourself in a minute. That calm is what this whole guide is about.

Read it in any order. Each chapter stands on its own. If a screen on your phone looks a little different from what I describe, don't worry. The companies change their buttons now and then, but the ideas stay the same.

And if you'd rather have someone sit beside you while you set things up, that's what I do. Call me at **(330) 200-8042**.

— Bill

CHAPTER 2

Who Brings Your Packages

Most packages that reach your door come from one of four places. Knowing which one has your package tells you where to look for it, and which company's tools can help.

Who	What they do
U.S. Postal Service (USPS)	Your regular mail carrier. Also delivers many packages, including a lot of online orders. Free tools: Informed Delivery, tracking, Hold Mail, redelivery.
UPS	The brown trucks. Free tool: UPS My Choice, with an optional paid Premium level.
FedEx	The purple-and-orange trucks. Free tool: FedEx Delivery Manager.
Amazon	Many Amazon orders come on Amazon's own vans; others are handed to USPS or UPS. Track them all in **Your Orders**.

Why it matters which one

Each company only knows about its own packages. The Post Office can't tell you where your UPS box is, and FedEx can't hold your USPS mail. So the first question when something is late is always: *who is carrying it?* Your order confirmation email, or the order page on the store's website, usually names the carrier and gives you a tracking number.

GOOD TO KNOW

Sometimes two companies share a package

Now and then a package is carried most of the way by one company and handed to the Post Office for the last stretch. If one company's tracking stops making sense, the store's order page usually shows who has it now.

SCAM ALERT

A message about a package you can't place

If a text says your package is held but doesn't say what you ordered or from where, that's a warning sign. Real tracking is tied to a real order. When you can't match a message to something you bought, treat it as a fake until you've checked it yourself.

CHAPTER 3

Tracking Numbers, Explained

A **tracking number** is a long string of letters and numbers that belongs to one package. Each time the package is scanned (at the warehouse, on the truck, at your door) the carrier records it, and anyone with the number can see those scans.

Where to find it

- In the **shipping confirmation email** from the store, often under "Track your package."
- On the store's website or app, on the page for your order.
- On the receipt the Post Office, UPS Store or FedEx counter gives you when *you* mail something.
- On a delivery notice left at your door.

How to use it safely

1. Find the tracking number in a place you trust, like the store's own website or your order page.
2. Open your web browser and **type the carrier's address yourself**: **usps.com**, **ups.com** or **fedex.com**.
3. Paste or type the number into the tracking box near the top of the page.
4. Read the latest status. The newest scan is usually at the top.

> **TIP**
>
> **Copy and paste beats retyping**
>
> Tracking numbers are long and easy to mistype. On a phone, press and hold on the number in the store's email until it highlights, tap **Copy**, then press and hold in the tracking box and tap **Paste**.

What the common statuses mean

Status	What it usually means
Label created / Pre-shipment	The seller printed a label. The carrier may not have the box yet.
In transit	It's moving between buildings. Days can pass between scans; that's normal.
Out for delivery	It's on the truck and should arrive today.

Status	What it usually means
Delivered	The carrier says it reached your address. Check porch, mailbox, side door.
Delivery attempted / Notice left	Nobody could sign or there was no safe place. See your options.

HEADS UP

Label created doesn't mean shipped

A package can sit at "label created" for a day or two while the seller packs it. If it stays there much longer, contact the *seller*. The carrier can't track a box it hasn't been handed yet.

CHAPTER 4

The One Rule: Go to the Source Yourself

If you remember just one thing from this guide, make it this: **never check on a package through a link someone sent you.** Check it by going to the source yourself.

What "going to the source" means

- Type **usps.com**, **ups.com**, **fedex.com** or **amazon.com** into your browser with your own fingers, or
- Open the carrier's or store's **official app** that you downloaded from the App Store or Google Play, or
- Look at your **Informed Delivery** dashboard, which you set up yourself (Part 2 shows how).

If there really is a problem with a package, it will show up there. If the real site says everything is fine, the text or email that worried you was a fake.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One habit beats every trick

Scammers change their wording all the time: unpaid postage, wrong address, a customs fee, a redelivery charge. You don't need to learn them all. Going to the source yourself defeats every one of them, because the scammer can't change what the real website shows.

SCAM ALERT

The link is the trap

A fake delivery text exists to get you to tap its link. The page it opens looks just like the carrier's site and asks for a small fee, your card number or your personal details. The Postal Inspection Service says that even opening the link without pressing submit is reason enough to call your bank. More on that in *If You Already Tapped the Link* (Chapter 28).

Save the real sites where you can find them

1. Open your browser and type the carrier's address yourself, for example **usps.com**.
2. On an iPhone in Safari, tap the **Share** button and choose **Add Bookmark** or **Add to Home Screen**.
3. On Android in Chrome, tap the three dots at the top right, then the **star** to bookmark it, or **Add to Home screen**.

4. From now on, use that bookmark or home-screen icon instead of links in messages.

PART 2

USPS Informed Delivery

The Post Office's free service that shows you pictures of the letters coming today and keeps a list of your packages. Signing up, proving it's you, and reading your Daily Digest.

CHAPTER 5

What Informed Delivery Is

Informed Delivery is a free service from the U.S. Postal Service. Once you sign up, the Post Office sends you an email on days you have mail, with pictures of the letter-sized mail headed to your mailbox. It also keeps a running list of USPS packages coming to your address.

What you get

- **Pictures of your letters.** Gray-and-white images of the address side of letter-sized mail, taken by the Post Office's sorting machines.
- **Package updates.** USPS packages headed to you appear as a status list, not as pictures.
- **A dashboard** on the web and in the app where you can look at it all any time.
- **Optional alerts** by email or text when packages move, and an optional email when the day's mail has been delivered.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

See your mail before you walk to the mailbox

You'll know whether that check, bank card or letter from the doctor is coming today. You'll notice if something shows up in the pictures but never makes it to your box. And when a text claims a USPS package is stuck, you can look at your own list and see the truth.

What it doesn't show

- Catalogs, magazines and other large pieces usually aren't photographed, because they aren't processed on the same machines.
- There's no email on Sundays or federal holidays, or on days with no mail for you.
- Packages from UPS, FedEx or Amazon's own vans don't appear. Only USPS packages do.

GOOD TO KNOW

It's free, and it's yours

USPS doesn't charge for Informed Delivery. If anyone ever asks you to pay to sign up, renew or "reactivate" it, that's a scam.

CHAPTER 6

Signing Up, Step by Step

Signing up takes about ten minutes. You'll need your home address, an email address, and a mobile phone that can get texts (that's the easiest way to prove who you are).

Before you start

- Most homes are eligible. Some apartment buildings and condos aren't yet, because each mailbox needs its own unique address code. The sign-up page tells you right away.
- If you already have a **USPS.com account** (for example from buying stamps or holding your mail), use it. You can turn on Informed Delivery from your account preferences.
- A business address or a PO Box under a business needs a USPS.com business account. This guide covers home addresses.

Signing up

1. Open your web browser and type **usps.com** yourself. Search for **Informed Delivery**, or type **informeddelivery.usps.com**.
2. Choose the option to sign up.
3. Enter your home address. The site checks whether your address is eligible.
4. Create your USPS.com account, or sign in if you already have one. Pick a strong password you don't use anywhere else.
5. Verify your identity. Usually this means USPS texts a code to your mobile phone and you type it in. The next chapter covers what to do if that doesn't work.
6. Agree to the terms and finish. Write your USPS.com username somewhere safe.

> **TIP**
>
> **Give it a few days**
>
> USPS says notifications typically start within three business days. In rare cases it can take up to seven. If you've heard nothing after a week, sign in and check that your email address is right.

HEADS UP

Changing your details opts you out

If you later change the name, email or address on your USPS.com account, USPS turns off Informed Delivery and you'll need to opt back in, sometimes proving your identity again. Plan for that if you change email providers.

CHAPTER 7

Proving It's You: Identity Verification

Because Informed Delivery shows pictures of your mail, USPS has to be sure the person signing up really lives at that address. That's why it asks you to prove your identity. It's a good thing, even when it's a nuisance.

The three ways to verify

Method	How it works
A code by text	The quickest. USPS texts a one-time code to your mobile number and you type it in.
A code by mail	If online checking fails, you can ask for an invitation code to be mailed to your address. USPS says it arrives in about 3 to 7 postal business days, and the code expires after 30 days.
In person	Most Post Offices can check your ID at the counter. Bring the identification the site lists. In-person checking isn't offered if the nearest Post Office is more than 50 miles away.

If the online check fails

1. Don't keep retrying. Read the screen: it offers **request an invitation code by mail** or **verify at a Post Office**.
2. Pick one right away. USPS says that if you leave without choosing, you must wait 72 hours before trying online again.
3. If you chose the mailed code, watch your mailbox for a letter from USPS, then sign in and enter the code.
4. If you chose the Post Office, follow the on-screen instructions about what to bring and where to go.

GOOD TO KNOW

Why the phone check sometimes fails

The text-code check compares your details with records tied to your phone number. If your phone plan is in a family member's name, or it's a prepaid phone, the match can fail. That's not your fault. The mailed code or the Post Office counter works just as well.

STAY SAFE

The welcome letter protects you

When someone signs up for Informed Delivery, USPS can mail a letter to the address showing a partly hidden username or email. If you get one and you recognize it, there's nothing to do. If you *don't* recognize it, follow the letter's instructions to shut that account off. Signing up yourself is one of the best ways to make sure no stranger is watching your mail.

CHAPTER 8

Your Daily Digest Email

The **Daily Digest** is the email USPS sends on mornings when mail is headed your way. It's the heart of Informed Delivery.

Reading it

1. Open your email and look for the message from USPS Informed Delivery.
2. Scroll through the pictures. Each one is the front of a letter or card coming today.
3. Look below the pictures for a list of USPS packages with their status.
4. That's it. When you later bring in the mail, you can compare.

When the pictures don't match the mailbox

- **Something pictured didn't arrive.** It often comes the next delivery day. If an important item is still missing after a day or two, see *Missing Mail and Lost Packages* (Chapter 16).
- **Something arrived that wasn't pictured.** Normal. Larger pieces and some mail aren't photographed.
- **A package is missing from the email.** The Digest goes out early. Packages scanned later in the day may not be listed. Check the dashboard.

TIP

Some pictures come in color

Now and then a company that mails you something pays to show a color picture or a link beside its letter. That's a real feature called an interactive campaign. It's the company's advertising, so treat it like any ad: you don't have to click.

SCAM ALERT

A fake Digest is possible

Scammers can copy the look of any email. The real Daily Digest never asks for your password, card number or a fee. If an "Informed Delivery" email asks for any of those, or says your account will close, delete it. To check, type **usps.com** yourself and sign in.

CHAPTER 9

The Dashboard and Settings

The **dashboard** is your Informed Delivery home page. It shows the same mail pictures and packages as the email, plus more. It's the safest place to check, because you go there yourself.

Getting to your dashboard

1. Type **informeddelivery.usps.com** into your browser, or go to **usps.com** and choose Informed Delivery.
2. Sign in with your USPS.com username and password.
3. Look at the mail section to see today's letters and the last few days.
4. Switch to the packages section to see USPS packages coming to you, and ones you've sent.
5. Open **Settings** to choose which emails and alerts you want.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

One place to check, every time

Make the dashboard your answer to every "is this real?" USPS message. Bookmark it once, and checking takes less than a minute.

Settings worth a look

- **Daily Digest email**: on or off.
- **Mail Delivery Notification**: an email once your mail has been delivered for the day (not yet available for PO Boxes and some ZIP Codes).
- **Package notifications**: email or text alerts as USPS packages move.

GOOD TO KNOW

Away from home? It keeps working

If you've asked USPS to hold your mail (*Hold Mail While You're Away* (Chapter 13)), Informed Delivery still shows you what's being held, so you can see what's waiting for you.

CHAPTER 10

Package Alerts and Mail Delivery Notifications

Informed Delivery can send you alerts so you don't have to keep checking. Here's how to choose what you get, and how to tell real alerts from fakes.

Turning on the alerts you want

1. Sign in to your Informed Delivery dashboard (typed in yourself).
2. Open **Settings**.
3. Find the package notification options and choose **email**, **text** or both.
4. To get an email when the day's mail has been delivered, check the box for **Mail Delivery Notification**.
5. Save your changes.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Bring the mail in sooner

A note that says "your mail has been delivered" means you can fetch it right away instead of leaving checks and bills sitting in the box. The Postal Inspection Service lists picking up mail promptly as one of the best guards against mail theft.

How to tell a real USPS alert

- You asked for it. USPS only sends package texts or emails after you've signed up for them or requested tracking on a specific number.
- Real USPS tracking texts come from a short five-digit number, and the Postal Inspection Service says they won't contain a link.
- A real alert never asks for money, a card number or your password.

SCAM ALERT

"Your package can't be delivered: update your address"

This is the most common fake of all. If you didn't request tracking on that package directly from USPS and the text has a link, it's a scam. Don't tap. Check your Informed Delivery dashboard instead. *Reporting a Fake: 7726, spam@uspis.gov and More* (Chapter 27) shows how to report it.

PART 3

USPS Tracking, Hold Mail & Redelivery

Tracking a Post Office package on the web or by text, pausing your mail while you're away, getting a missed package redelivered, the USPS apps, and what to do when something goes missing.

CHAPTER 11

Tracking a USPS Package

If you have a USPS tracking number, you can follow the package on the Post Office's website. You don't need an account to look one up.

1. Type **usps.com** into your browser yourself.
2. Find the **Track** box near the top of the page.
3. Type or paste your tracking number and press **Track**.
4. Read the newest status at the top. Tap or click to see the full history.
5. If you want updates without checking again, look for the option on the tracking page to get text or email updates for that package.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You're in charge of the updates

When you ask for updates on the tracking page, you've started the conversation. Those are the only USPS package texts you should ever get, which makes every other one easy to spot as a fake.

TIP

No tracking number? Use Informed Delivery

With Informed Delivery, USPS packages addressed to you show up on your dashboard on their own, even if the sender never gave you a number.

Talking to a person

The USPS Customer Care Center is **1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777)**. USPS lists the hours as Monday to Friday 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Eastern, and Saturday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Eastern. Have your tracking number ready. Your local Post Office can help too.

SCAM ALERT

Look up the number yourself

Fake delivery messages sometimes include a phone number for "USPS support." Never call a number from a message. Use the number above, or the one listed on usps.com.

CHAPTER 12

Text Tracking with 28777

USPS has a simple text service. You send it a tracking number and it texts back the latest status. No app or account needed.

1. Open your phone's **Messages** app and start a new message.
2. In the To line, type **28777** (it spells 2USPS).
3. In the message, type or paste your tracking number and send it.
4. USPS replies with the latest status, and keeps texting as the package moves.

Handy words to send to 28777

Text this	What happens
HELP	Sends back information about the service.
KEYWORD	Sends back a list of words you can add after a tracking number for specific details.
Quiet	Pauses updates overnight, 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Central time. Send **Awake** to turn that off.
STOP	Ends text tracking. Note: it cancels *all* your text tracking requests, not just one.

GOOD TO KNOW

Costs and limits

USPS doesn't charge for the service, but your phone plan's normal message rates may apply. It works with U.S. phone numbers.

SCAM ALERT

Real USPS texts don't carry links

Real USPS tracking texts come from a five-digit short code like 28777, and the Postal Inspection Service says they won't contain a link. A "USPS" text from a regular 10-digit phone number or an email address, with a link to tap, is a fake.

CHAPTER 13

Hold Mail While You're Away

Going to see family or heading south for a few weeks? **USPS Hold Mail** keeps your mail and packages at the Post Office until you're back. A stuffed mailbox is a signal that nobody's home, so this is about safety as much as convenience.

The basics

- It's free.
- A hold lasts at least **3 days** and at most **30 days**.
- You can ask up to 30 days ahead, or as soon as the next delivery day.
- Online, you'll need to sign in to USPS.com and verify your identity, the same way as for Informed Delivery.
- If online Hold Mail isn't available at your address, ask at your Post Office in person (they'll have the form).
- Away longer than 30 days? USPS points you to mail forwarding instead.

Requesting a hold online

1. Type **usps.com** yourself and search for **Hold Mail**.
2. Sign in to your USPS.com account (or create one) and verify your identity if asked.
3. Enter your address and check that it's eligible.
4. Choose your start date and end date.
5. Choose what happens when the hold ends: your carrier delivers everything, or you pick it up at the Post Office.
6. Submit, and keep the confirmation number USPS gives you. You'll need it to change or cancel the hold.

TIP

Hold UPS and FedEx too

Hold Mail only covers the Post Office. For UPS, have packages kept at a UPS Access Point (*Changing a UPS Delivery: Holds, Neighbors and Access Points* (Chapter 19)). For FedEx, use a vacation hold (*Vacation Holds, Door Tags and Redirects* (Chapter 22)). And let a trusted neighbor know you're away.

SCAM ALERT

No one charges to hold your mail

A text or call offering to "activate" a mail hold for a fee is a scam. Hold Mail costs nothing.

CHAPTER 14

Missed a Delivery? Scheduling Redelivery

If the carrier couldn't leave something (often because it needs a signature) you'll find a paper notice in your mailbox or on the door. USPS calls it a **redelivery notice**. Here's what to do next. Redelivery is free.

Scheduling it online

1. Find the tracking number or barcode on the notice.
2. Type **usps.com** yourself and search for **Schedule a Redelivery**. (The notice may also have a QR code. More on that below.)
3. Enter the tracking number or the barcode number from the notice, and your address.
4. Choose a redelivery date, or choose to pick it up at the Post Office. Some notices also offer a USPS Smart Locker with a one-time pickup code.
5. Submit. Write down the confirmation number; USPS emails it to you too, and you'll need it to make changes.

TIP

Want it tomorrow?

USPS says that for redelivery the same day, you need to request it by 2 a.m. Central time, Monday through Saturday. Otherwise pick a date that suits you.

Other ways

- **On paper:** fill out the back of the notice and leave it in your mailbox for your carrier. Allow a couple of days. Items that need a signature still need you to sign in person.
- **By phone:** call 1-800-ASK-USPS with your tracking number.
- **In the app:** from the package's detailed tracking page in the USPS apps.

HEADS UP

Don't wait too long

USPS doesn't redeliver on its own. If you do nothing, a second notice follows, and eventually the item goes back to the sender. Act on the notice within a few days.

SCAM ALERT

Paper notices with QR codes

A real USPS notice may have a QR code that opens the redelivery page. But scammers also leave fake notices and send QR codes (the Postal Inspection Service calls this "quishing"). If you scan one, look at the web address before doing anything: it must end in **usps.com**. Safer still, type usps.com yourself and enter the barcode number.

CHAPTER 15

The USPS Apps on Your Phone

There are two official Post Office apps. Both are free, from the App Store (iPhone) or Google Play (Android). The publisher listed should be the **United States Postal Service**.

App	What it's for
USPS Mobile	The all-round app: track packages (including by scanning the barcode on a label), find Post Offices, request Hold Mail, and reach Informed Delivery.
Informed Delivery	A separate app USPS launched in October 2025, just for Informed Delivery: mail pictures, package tracking, notifications, scanning tracking numbers and barcodes, and sharing a package's status. It supports face or fingerprint sign-in.

Installing one

1. On an iPhone, open the **App Store**. On Android, open **Google Play**.
2. Search for **USPS Mobile** or **Informed Delivery**.
3. Check that the developer is the United States Postal Service, then tap **Get** or **Install**.
4. Open the app and sign in with your USPS.com username and password.
5. When the app asks to send notifications, choose **Allow** if you'd like alerts.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A real alert lives inside a real app

A notification that pops up from the official app you installed is genuine. A text from an unknown number is not. Using the app gives you a trusted channel the scammers can't fake.

HEADS UP

Look-alike apps

Search results can include other companies' tracking apps. Some are fine, but you don't need them. Stick with the ones from the United States Postal Service.

CHAPTER 16

Missing Mail and Lost Packages

Most "missing" packages turn up within a day: at a neighbor's, behind a planter, or simply late. When something truly goes missing, here's the order I'd go in.

1. Check the tracking page. Look for a delivery photo or a note about where it was left.
2. Look around: porch, side and back doors, the mailbox, with neighbors.
3. Give it until the end of the next delivery day. Packages are sometimes scanned as delivered a little early.
4. Contact the **sender or store**. They're the shipper's customer and can often send a replacement or start a claim.
5. If it was sent by USPS and still hasn't arrived, use USPS's **Missing Mail** search request on usps.com. USPS allows a request starting seven days after the mailing date.

What USPS asks for in a search request

- The sender's and your addresses.
- The date it was mailed and the tracking number, if there is one.
- A description of the package and what was inside, with photos if you have them.

GOOD TO KNOW

You fill it in yourself

USPS says its phone agents can't submit a missing mail search for you. It's done on usps.com. If the form feels daunting, it's a good thing to do with a family member or with me.

STAY SAFE

If you think mail was stolen

Stolen mail (especially checks or bank cards) is a matter for the **U.S. Postal Inspection Service**, the Post Office's police. Report it at **uspis.gov/report** or call **1-877-876-2455**. Then call your bank if a check or card was involved.

PART 4

UPS My Choice

UPS's own tool for seeing and steering the packages it brings you: what the free level does, what Premium adds, and how to hold or redirect a delivery.

CHAPTER 17

What UPS My Choice Is: Free vs. Premium

UPS My Choice is UPS's service for people who receive packages. Once you join, UPS packages headed to your address appear on your own dashboard, often without you ever typing a tracking number. There's a free level (UPS calls it Basic) and a paid level called Premium.

What the free level gives you

- Delivery alerts by text or email, with an estimated delivery time.
- A **photo** showing where the driver left the package (on most home deliveries).
- A list of your incoming and outgoing UPS packages, with the past four months in a calendar view.
- Delivery preferences, like telling the driver where at your home to leave packages, or to leave them with a neighbor.

When fees come in

Some changes to a single delivery cost extra on the free level. This is UPS's list price per package as of November 2026:

Change	Free (Basic) member	Premium member
Deliver on another day	$9.99	Included
Deliver to another address	$14.99	Included
Send to a UPS Access Point location	$5.99	Included
Confirmed 2-hour delivery window	$14.99	2 a year included, then a fee

Premium costs $19.99 a year. It includes unlimited eligible delivery changes and two confirmed two-hour delivery windows a year. UPS notes that extra transportation charges can still apply if a package has to go outside its original delivery area.

FROM BILL

Do you need Premium?

For most of the folks I help, the free level is plenty: the alerts and photos are the parts that matter day to day. Premium makes sense if you often have to reroute or reschedule UPS deliveries. If you change one or two deliveries a year, paying per change costs less.

TIP

Skip the fee with an Access Point preference

UPS says there's no charge for members who set a preference to send *all* their packages straight to a UPS Access Point location. The benefit topic near the start of this guide walks through it.

GOOD TO KNOW

Not the same as Informed Delivery

UPS My Choice only covers UPS packages. Informed Delivery is a separate Post Office service. Many people use both, and FedEx Delivery Manager too.

CHAPTER 18

Signing Up and Delivery Alerts

Joining the free level takes a few minutes. UPS may then mail you a letter with an activation code to confirm you really live at the address.

Joining

1. Type **ups.com** into your browser yourself. Search for **UPS My Choice**, or find it under Tracking.
2. Choose **Sign Up for Free**.
3. Create a UPS profile (or sign in to one you have) with your email and a strong password.
4. Enter your home address and your name as it usually appears on packages.
5. Choose how you want alerts: text, email, or both.
6. Finish. Keep an eye on your mailbox for the activation letter.

The activation letter

- If UPS needs to confirm your address, it mails a welcome letter with an activation code, about 7 to 14 days after you join.
- Sign in, and a box will ask for the code. Enter it as printed.
- The code stops working 45 days after the date on the letter.
- Until you're confirmed, some options (like sending a package to another address) aren't available.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

UPS tells you, instead of you chasing UPS

Once you're set up, alerts arrive on their own and a photo shows exactly where a box was left. No more walking around the house looking for it.

The UPS app

UPS also has a free app, simply called **UPS**, in the App Store and Google Play. Sign in with the same UPS profile to see your My Choice packages, get notifications and make changes on your phone.

SCAM ALERT

Fake UPS messages

UPS says it doesn't ask for payments, personal information, account numbers or passwords in unexpected emails. Check any UPS message by typing **ups.com** yourself or opening the UPS app. To report a fake, forward it to **fraud@ups.com** (see *Reporting a Fake: 7726, spam@uspis.gov and More* (Chapter 27)).

CHAPTER 19

Changing a UPS Delivery: Holds, Neighbors and Access Points

Won't be home? With UPS My Choice you can often steer a package before it arrives. Not every package allows every option. Some senders restrict changes.

What a UPS Access Point is

A **UPS Access Point** is a nearby shop that receives packages for you: The UPS Store and many partner stores. UPS says Access Point locations hold a package for up to **seven calendar days** for My Choice members at no added charge. (UPS customer centers hold for up to five business days.)

Changing a delivery

1. Open the UPS app, or type **ups.com** yourself and sign in.
2. Find the package on your My Choice dashboard, or track it by number.
3. Choose the option to change the delivery (on ups.com it's called **Change My Delivery**).
4. Pick what you want: another day, leave with a neighbor, send to a UPS Access Point, or another address. Any fee shows before you confirm.
5. Confirm, and watch for the updated alert.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Packages that wait safely for you

Sending a package to an Access Point means it sits behind a counter instead of on your porch. That's ideal for expensive items, medications, or weeks when you're out a lot.

TIP

Adding a gate or door code

If your building has a gate or entry code, UPS lets you add it to your delivery instructions through the same Change My Delivery screen.

HEADS UP

Picking up

UPS says you'll normally need your **ID and the tracking number** to collect from an Access Point. Now and then a location may ask for more, such as a release code or a utility bill. Don't leave it too long: you have seven calendar days.

PART 5

FedEx Delivery Manager

FedEx's free tool for home deliveries: alerts with photos, notes for your driver, signing for a package when you're out, vacation holds, and sending a package to a nearby store.

CHAPTER 20

What FedEx Delivery Manager Is

FedEx Delivery Manager lets you decide when, where and how FedEx packages reach your home. Signing up is free, and the options most people use are free too. It works on the web at **fedex.com** and in the free **FedEx** app for iPhone and Android, which you don't have to download if you prefer the website.

Included free

- Tracking, with alerts by email, text, phone call or app notification.
- A photo when your package is delivered, or when FedEx tried to deliver it.
- A live map view on delivery day, and on eligible packages your driver's name and photo.
- Saved delivery instructions for your driver.
- Signing for eligible packages from your phone or computer.
- Redirecting a package to a FedEx pickup location, such as Walgreens, FedEx Office or Dollar General.
- Redelivery, and a vacation hold of up to 14 days.

Costs extra

Option	FedEx's listed price (starts at)
Evening delivery, 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the scheduled day	$5.55 per package
A 2-hour window, up to 7 days after the original date	$11.50 per package
Reroute to another home within 120 miles	$5.55 per package

FedEx says prices vary by location and are shown when you ask for the service.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

"Be sure about the driver who's at your door"

Seeing your driver's name and photo in the tracking helps you know who to expect, and gives you a reason to be wary of anyone else who shows up claiming to be "from FedEx."

Signing up

1. Type **fedex.com** into your browser yourself, and search for **Delivery Manager**.
2. Choose **Sign up for free**.

3. Create a FedEx account (or sign in) and enter your home address.
4. Confirm your address. FedEx may ask you to activate the account with a code sent by text or by mail.
5. Choose how you want to be notified.

CHAPTER 21

Alerts, Driver Instructions and Signing for a Package

Delivery instructions

Tell FedEx where to leave packages (a side door, under the awning, the apartment office), or ask the driver not to ring the bell or knock. You type it once and it applies to all future FedEx deliveries to your address.

1. Sign in to fedex.com or the FedEx app.
2. Open **Delivery Manager** and find your delivery preferences.
3. Add your instructions in plain words, for example "Leave behind the planter on the back porch."
4. Save.

> TIP
> **Napping? Ask them not to ring**
> The no-knock, no-ring request is a small kindness to yourself if a doorbell sets off the dog or wakes you from a nap. You'll still get the alert and photo.

Signing for a package when you're out

Some packages need a signature. For many of them, FedEx lets you **sign ahead of time** on your phone or computer, which authorizes the driver to leave it.

1. Track the package at fedex.com or in the app.
2. If it's eligible, you'll see an option to sign for it.
3. Read the terms and sign with your finger or mouse.
4. Watch for the delivery alert and photo, and bring the package in soon after.

> HEADS UP
> **Not for every package**
> Remote signing isn't available when the sender requires an **adult signature** or a direct, in-person signature. That's common for medications and valuable items. For those, use a pickup location (*Vacation Holds, Door Tags and Redirects* (Chapter 22)).

CHAPTER 22

Vacation Holds, Door Tags and Redirects

Vacation hold

FedEx can stop delivering to your home for up to **14 days** at no charge. You pick the dates; deliveries start again on the first business day after the end date. The hold covers every FedEx package to your address.

1. Sign in to fedex.com or the FedEx app and open **Delivery Manager**.
2. Choose **vacation hold**.
3. Enter your start and end dates and save.

Sending a package to a FedEx location

You can ask FedEx to send a package to a nearby pickup location for free. FedEx says a request made before midnight the day before delivery is usually ready for pickup the next day, and the location holds it for up to **7 days**.

1. Track the package with its number at fedex.com, or open it in the app.
2. Choose **Manage Delivery**, then **Hold at Location**.
3. Pick a location from the list.
4. Confirm. When it's ready, pick it up with a government-issued ID, or use the QR code FedEx gives you in the app.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Someone else can pick it up for you

After you redirect a package, you can show a QR code instead of ID, and you can send that QR code to a family member or friend so they can collect it for you. That doesn't work for packages that need an adult signature.

If you find a door tag

A FedEx **door tag** means the driver tried but couldn't deliver. Use the number on the tag in Delivery Manager to ask for another try, redirect the package to a pickup location, or refuse it.

SCAM ALERT

Fake FedEx messages

FedEx says it doesn't ask for your account login or identity details in unexpected mail, email or text. If a message says "FedEx" and wants a fee or your details, don't tap it. Forward suspicious emails to **abuse@fedex.com** and check your package by typing fedex.com yourself.

PART 6

Amazon and Keeping It All Together

Tracking Amazon orders in brief, and a simple routine for keeping every package from every carrier in view without feeling swamped.

CHAPTER 23

Amazon Tracking in Brief

If you shop on Amazon, you don't need a tracking number at all. Amazon keeps track for you, whichever company actually carries the box. (My separate Amazon Shopping guide goes into much more detail.)

Tracking an Amazon order

1. Open the **Amazon Shopping** app, or type **amazon.com** into your browser yourself and sign in.
2. Go to **Your Orders**.
3. Find the item and tap **Track package**.
4. Read the status and expected date. On delivery day there's sometimes a map, and afterward often a photo of where the package was left.

GOOD TO KNOW

Amazon packages can come by any carrier

Some Amazon orders come on Amazon's own vans, others by the Post Office or UPS. The Amazon tracking page is still the place to look, and USPS-carried ones may also show up in Informed Delivery.

Is this Amazon message real?

Amazon says its genuine messages appear in the **Message Center** in your Amazon account. If a text or email claims to be Amazon and it isn't in Your Orders or the Message Center, it's a fake.

- Amazon customers can report a scam at **amazon.com/ReportAScam**.
- If you're not an Amazon customer, Amazon asks you to forward the message to **reportascam@amazon.com**, ideally as an attachment.

SCAM ALERT

"Your Amazon package is held: confirm your payment"

Amazon doesn't text you a link to pay a delivery fee or re-enter your card. Open the Amazon app yourself and look at Your Orders. If nothing's wrong there, delete the message.

CHAPTER 24

Keeping Every Package in View

With a few free sign-ups, nearly every package that comes to your home shows up somewhere you can trust. Here's a simple setup and a simple routine.

A one-time setup

Sign up for	Covers	Where
USPS Informed Delivery	Letters and USPS packages	informeddelivery.usps.com or the app
UPS My Choice (free)	UPS packages	ups.com or the UPS app
FedEx Delivery Manager	FedEx home deliveries	fedex.com or the FedEx app
Your Amazon account	Amazon orders	amazon.com or the Amazon app

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

A short list of trusted places

Once you're set up, you only need to remember four places. Any message about a package that you can't find in one of them is almost certainly a fake. That turns a confusing world of texts into a simple yes-or-no check.

A two-minute routine

1. In the morning, glance at your Informed Delivery email or app.
2. When an alert arrives from one of your official apps, note the expected time.
3. When the alert says delivered, bring the package in soon after. Look at the delivery photo if it's not where you expect.
4. If a text or email about a package arrives from anywhere else, don't tap it. Check one of your four places instead.

TIP

Use one email address for all four

If you sign up for all four with the same email address, every genuine alert lands in one inbox, and it's easier to notice when something doesn't belong.

HEADS UP

Too many alerts?

If the notifications start to feel like noise, turn some off. Keep "out for delivery" and "delivered" alerts, and switch off the in-between steps in each service's settings.

PART 7

Fake Delivery Texts and Emails

The most common scam texts of all pretend to come from the Post Office, UPS, FedEx or Amazon. What they look like, how the real carriers actually contact you, how to report a fake, and what to do if you already tapped.

CHAPTER 25

What the Fakes Look Like

Fake delivery messages work because almost everyone is expecting *some* package. Send enough texts and plenty will land on someone who really is waiting for a delivery. The coincidence is the trick.

Typical wording

- "USPS: Your package could not be delivered due to an incomplete address. Update here: [link]"
- "Your parcel is on hold. A redelivery fee of $1.99 is required."
- "Delivery Failure Notification" (an email with a button or an attachment).
- "Unpaid postage: pay within 24 hours or your package will be returned."
- A paper card or package insert with a QR code to "find out who sent your gift."

SCAM ALERT

The small fee is the hook

A tiny charge, like a dollar or two, feels harmless. But the page that collects it is collecting your **card number**, and often your name, address and birth date too. The FTC says the real USPS will never demand payment to redeliver a package.

Red flags

Red flag	Why it matters
A link in the text	USPS's tracking texts don't include links. Others may, but never trust one you didn't ask for.
You never asked for tracking	USPS doesn't text or email about a package unless you requested it with a tracking number.
A regular phone number or email as sender	Real USPS texts come from five-digit short codes.
A fee, a deadline or a threat	"Pay now or it will be returned" is pressure, not service.
A web address that's almost right	Look-alikes such as "usps-redelivery" or extra words and dashes.
Odd spelling or grammar	The Postal Inspection Service lists this as a common sign.

CHAPTER 26

How the Real Carriers Contact You

Knowing how genuine messages arrive makes the fakes easy to spot. Here's what each company says about itself.

Carrier	How the real one behaves
USPS	Sends package texts or emails only after you've asked, either with a tracking number or by signing up for Informed Delivery alerts. The Postal Inspection Service says USPS tracking texts won't contain a link. USPS doesn't charge for tracking.
UPS	Doesn't ask for payment, personal information, account numbers or passwords in unexpected email. Genuine UPS email comes from ups.com or upsemail.com, but a fake can disguise its sender, so still check by typing ups.com yourself.
FedEx	Doesn't ask for your login or identity details in unexpected mail, email or text.
Amazon	Its genuine messages also appear in the Message Center in your Amazon account.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You only trust what you started

Here's the simple version: **if you didn't start it, don't trust it.** Alerts from apps you installed and services you signed up for are fine. Anything else gets checked at the source first.

GOOD TO KNOW

But the Informed Delivery email has links

True. The Daily Digest you signed up for is a real email with real links. Even so, I suggest getting into the habit of opening your dashboard from your own bookmark or the app. Then a convincing fake copy can never catch you.

CHAPTER 27

Reporting a Fake: 7726, spam@uspis.gov and More

Reporting a fake takes a minute and helps get the scammer's number shut down. You don't have to; simply deleting it is fine. But if you'd like to fight back, here's how.

A fake USPS text

1. **Don't tap the link.** Take a screenshot that shows the sender's number and the date.
2. Press and hold on the message, choose **Copy**, and paste the words into a new email.
3. Send that email to **spam@uspis.gov**. Include your name, attach the screenshot, and say whether you clicked, lost money or gave any information.
4. Forward the text itself to **7726** (it spells SPAM). Your phone company uses it to track the scam number.
5. Then delete the text, and block the number if you like.

A fake email

- **USPS:** forward it to **spam@uspis.gov**, then delete it.
- **UPS:** forward it to **fraud@ups.com**. UPS asks for the full email headers if you can; forwarding as an attachment usually carries them.
- **FedEx:** forward it to **abuse@fedex.com**.
- **Amazon:** use amazon.com/ReportAScam, or reportascam@amazon.com.
- **Any of them:** you can also report to the FTC at **reportfraud.ftc.gov**.

Reporting it on your phone

iPhone

1. Open the text in **Messages**. Don't tap anything inside it.
2. For a message from someone not in your contacts, look under the message for the option to report it as junk or spam, and tap it.
3. Confirm. Apple gets a copy and the message is deleted. Reporting doesn't stop the sender, so block the number too if you want.

Android (Google Messages)

1. In the conversation list, press and hold the conversation.

2. Tap **Block**, then **Report spam**, then **OK**.

TIP

Ask your phone company to block text-from-email

Many fake texts are sent from email addresses. The Postal Inspection Service suggests calling your carrier's customer service (often 611) and asking them to block text and picture messages sent to you as email. Some carriers let you do it in your online account.

CHAPTER 28

If You Already Tapped the Link

It happens to careful, clever people every day. These fake pages are very convincing. What matters now is acting quickly and calmly.

If you only opened the page

The Postal Inspection Service advises: if you interacted with the link at all, **even if you didn't press submit**, notify your bank or card company. Close the page and don't go back.

If you typed in details or paid

1. Call your bank or card company using the number on the back of your card. Tell them what happened and ask them to cancel the card and watch for fraud.
2. If you entered a password, change it right away on the real website, and anywhere else you use it.
3. If you gave your Social Security number or date of birth, consider freezing your credit, and visit the FTC's **IdentityTheft.gov** for a step-by-step recovery plan.
4. Report it: **spam@uspis.gov** (for a USPS fake, say what you entered), **reportfraud.ftc.gov**, and if you lost money, the FBI's **ic3.gov**.
5. Keep an eye on your statements for the next few months.

STAY SAFE

Watch out for the second scam

After a fake delivery text, some people get a call from someone "from your bank" or "from the Postal Service fraud department" offering to help. Hang up. Call your bank yourself on the number on your card. Real fraud departments never ask you to move money or read them a code.

FROM BILL

No shame, only next steps

If this has happened to you, take a breath. You're not foolish. You were targeted by professionals. Calling your bank quickly is the single most useful thing you can do, and it's exactly what careful people do.

CHAPTER 29

Packages You Didn't Order

Sometimes a real package shows up that nobody in the house ordered: cheap earrings, a phone case, seeds. The Postal Inspection Service calls this a **brushing** scam. An online seller sends you an item so it can post a fake "verified buyer" review in your name.

What to do

- **Don't pay for it.** By law you may keep unordered merchandise and you owe nothing.
- **If it's unopened** and has a return address, you can write "Return to Sender" on it and USPS returns it at no charge.
- **If you opened it**, you can keep it or throw it away, as long as that's safe.
- **Don't scan any QR code** inside. Some brushing packages now include a card with a QR code that leads to a fake site asking for your details.
- **Change your shopping account passwords** and keep an eye on your credit card bills, since the sender had your name and address.
- **Tell the store** it came from (for example Amazon) and ask it to remove any fake reviews.
- **Seeds, plants, food, liquids or powders:** don't open them; follow the Postal Inspection Service's suspicious mail instructions on uspis.gov.

SCAM ALERT

"Scan to see who sent your gift"

That card is the trap. The free gift was cheap; your card number and passwords are what the scammer is after. The FTC also warns against contacting the sender.

PART 8

Keeping Packages Safe

Simple, mostly free ways to keep packages off a thief's radar, and what to do, in order, if one is taken.

CHAPTER 30

Porch Piracy: Simple Ways to Protect Packages

"Porch pirates" are people who take packages from doorsteps. You don't need to buy anything fancy to make your home a poor target. Most of the best steps are free settings you've already met in this guide.

The free basics

- **Bring packages in promptly.** Turn on "delivered" alerts from each carrier so you know the moment one arrives.
- **Tell the driver where to leave it.** A spot out of sight of the street, set once in FedEx Delivery Manager, UPS My Choice or your Amazon address settings.
- **Send valuable items to a pickup spot.** A UPS Access Point, a FedEx location like Walgreens, or an Amazon locker. They sit behind a counter until you collect them.
- **Hold deliveries when you're away**: USPS Hold Mail, a FedEx vacation hold, UPS Access Point holds.
- **Ask a neighbor.** Many carriers let you choose "leave with neighbor." A neighbor you trust is the oldest and best package security there is.

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

Less time on the porch, less to worry about

Most thefts happen when a box sits in plain view for hours. Every step above shortens that window. Combine two or three and you've done most of what's possible.

Optional extras that cost money

- A **video doorbell** or camera that alerts you when someone's at the door. Many need a monthly plan to save recordings.
- A **lockable parcel box** by the door. Drivers can drop packages in; only you can open it.

TIP

When you're the sender

The Postal Inspection Service suggests shipping important items with **Hold for Pickup**, so the person collects it at their Post Office, or adding **Signature Confirmation**, so it isn't left unattended.

CHAPTER 31

When a Package Is Stolen

Finding an empty porch when tracking says delivered is upsetting. Take it one step at a time.

1. Look at the **delivery photo** in your tracking. Is that your door? If not, it may simply be at the wrong house.
2. Check around the house and with neighbors on both sides, and wait until the end of the day.
3. Save what you have: a screenshot of the tracking page and photo, and any doorbell video.
4. Contact the **seller**. Many stores replace or refund stolen packages, and they're often the one who can file a claim with the carrier.
5. Contact the **carrier** through its official website or app to report it.
6. File a report with your **local police**, especially for anything valuable. The seller or your insurance may ask for the report number.
7. If it was **USPS mail or a USPS package** and you think it was stolen, report it to the Postal Inspection Service at **uspis.gov/report** or **1-877-876-2455**.

SCAM ALERT

"We found your stolen package"

After you post about a theft on a neighborhood site, you may get messages offering to find or replace it for a fee, or "carrier" calls asking for your card to redeliver. Only deal with the seller and carrier through channels you look up yourself.

HEADS UP

Prescriptions and checks

If medicine was stolen, call your pharmacy. They can usually arrange a replacement. If a check or bank card was in the mail, call your bank right away.

PART 9

When to Call Bill & Your Cheat-Sheet

An honest word about when a helping hand makes sense, and a one-page cheat-sheet of the numbers, addresses and rules worth keeping by the phone.

CHAPTER 32

When to Call Bill

Everything in this guide can be done on your own, at your own pace. But some of it, especially the identity checks and the first-time setups, goes more smoothly with someone beside you. Here's when I'd want you to pick up the phone.

Call me when

- **You got a delivery text or email** and you're not sure whether it's real. A quick second opinion is always worth it.
- **You tapped a link** or typed in card details, and want help with the next steps after you've called your bank.
- **Informed Delivery won't verify you** online and you'd like help choosing the mailed code or the Post Office route.
- **You'd like everything set up at once**: Informed Delivery, UPS My Choice, FedEx Delivery Manager, and the official apps on your phone, with alerts tuned so they're helpful, not noisy.
- **You're traveling** and want mail holds, package holds and redirects all arranged before you go.
- **You're helping a parent** who lives alone and want to keep an eye on deliveries together.

FROM BILL

How I like to help

I'm Bill, and I've spent 30+ years helping people feel at home with their technology, right here in Portage County, Ohio. I don't rush and I don't talk down to anyone. We'll go at your pace, and you'll keep notes in your own words. Help from me is **$49 remote · $99 in your home**. Call **(330) 200-8042** or book a time at **billshometech.com/book**. If I'm with another client, Sophie, my AI receptionist, will answer and make sure I get back to you.

STAY SAFE

Asking first is the smart move

Scammers count on you acting alone and in a hurry. Stopping to ask someone you trust takes away their biggest advantage. Never feel silly for checking. It's what careful people do.

Thank you for reading. You now know more about delivery tools and delivery scams than most people ever will. Set up the free services, trust your own bookmarks, and let the fake

texts go straight to the trash.

— Bill

CHAPTER 33

Your Package Cheat-Sheet

Keep a copy of this by the phone or on the fridge.

The golden rules

- **Never tap a link** in a delivery text you didn't ask for.
- **Go to the source yourself**: type the website or open the official app.
- **No real carrier** texts you for a redelivery fee or your card number.
- **If you didn't start it, don't trust it.**
- **If you tapped**, call your bank on the number on your card.

Your trusted places

Carrier	Where to check
USPS	usps.com · informeddelivery.usps.com · USPS Mobile and Informed Delivery apps
UPS	ups.com · UPS app · UPS My Choice (free; Premium $19.99 a year)
FedEx	fedex.com · FedEx app · Delivery Manager (free)
Amazon	amazon.com · Amazon app · Your Orders and Message Center

Handy numbers and limits

What	Details
USPS Customer Care	1-800-ASK-USPS (1-800-275-8777)
USPS text tracking	Text the tracking number to 28777
USPS Hold Mail	Free, 3 to 30 days
FedEx vacation hold	Free, up to 14 days
UPS Access Point hold	Up to 7 calendar days
FedEx location hold	Up to 7 days

Report a fake

If you get…	Report it to
Fake USPS text	Email spam@uspis.gov with a screenshot, and forward the text to 7726

If you get…	Report it to
Fake USPS email	Forward to spam@uspis.gov
Fake UPS message	fraud@ups.com
Fake FedEx message	abuse@fedex.com
Fake Amazon message	amazon.com/ReportAScam
Anything else	reportfraud.ftc.gov
Stolen mail	uspis.gov/report or 1-877-876-2455

WHAT THIS DOES FOR YOU

You've got this

You know where your packages are, how to hold and steer them, and how to spot a fake in seconds. That's real peace of mind, and you earned it.

Bill's Home Tech · (330) 200-8042 · billshometech.com/book · $49 remote · $99 in your home · Portage County, Ohio