

International Reply Coupons – the in and outs Negotiating IRCs at the USPS is so difficult, print this document and take it with you!

UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

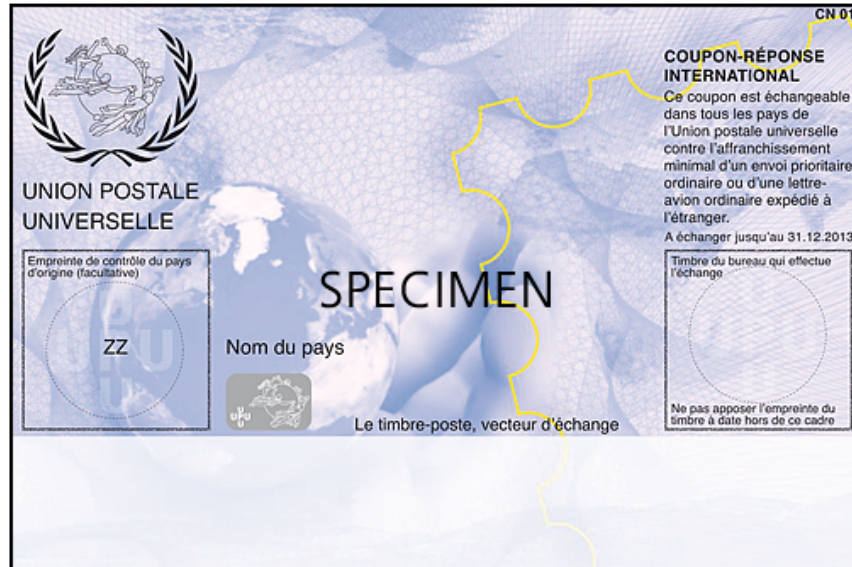


> 2008 Archived News

HOME

■ ■ New international reply coupon unveiled

The new illustration that will adorn the international reply coupon (IRC) as from 1 July 2009 was unveiled today in Geneva during a plenary meeting of the 24th Universal Postal Congress.



A Luxembourg artist won the competition, organized by the UPU's International Bureau in order to find a design for the next generation of IRCs. The work by Rob van GOOR, a graphic artist from the Luxembourg Post, was selected from amongst 10 designs presented by UPU member countries. The artist interpreted the theme of the contest, "The postage stamp: a vehicle for exchange", by depicting the world being cradled by a hand, and the perforated outline of a postage stamp. All 169 countries present at the UPU Congress had the opportunity to cast a vote for the winning design.

The new IRC, known as the Nairobi model, will go on sale on 1 July 2009. Postal customers, collectors and philatelists will probably be able to exchange it until the end of 2013. It will replace the current coupon, known as Beijing 2, which first went on sale on 1 July 2006 and will remain valid until 31 December 2009.

The international reply coupon is a postal product exchangeable in every UPU member country for one or more postage stamps representing the minimum postage for an ordinary priority letter-post item or an ordinary airmail letter sent abroad for the reply. Some 2.2 million reply coupons are sold each year by 121 postal administrations. While not all countries sell IRCs, all the postal operators of the UPU's 191 member countries, and their territories, are required to exchange them.

More than a century after it first appeared in 1907, the international reply coupon remains a useful item. Aside from its traditional use for correspondence, two particular groups of users have emerged: students, who use it as a means of exchanging correspondence with academic institutions, and amateur radio enthusiasts, who use coupons when exchanging their "QSL cards" confirming radio reception.

This information comes directly from the Universal Postal Union web site at:

http://www.upu.int/news_centre/2008/en/2008-08-08_irc.shtml . This is the latest version, even if dated 2008.

MailPro

News for Mailing Professionals

FYI

Go online to usps.com/prices.

Will all international mail prices be adjusted?

Yes.

What are the new Express Mail International Flat Rate Envelope prices?

The Express Mail International Flat Rate Envelope retail price will be \$23.95 for Canada and Mexico and \$25.95 for all other countries. Commercial base prices will be 8 percent below retail prices.

Are there any changes to Express Mail International pricing?

Yes. Customers using Click-N-Ship or PC Postage will continue to get a commercial base price 8 percent lower than the comparable retail price. We are expanding availability of the commercial prices to include customers who pay postage using an Express Mail Corporate Account and who use approved software for mail preparation and customs-related functions.

In addition, we're adding commercial volume prices in the form of quarterly rebates based on annualized volume or postage for customers who pay postage through an Express Mail Corporate Account.

Are there any changes to Priority Mail International pricing?

Yes. Customers using Click-N-Ship or PC Postage will continue to get a commercial base price 5 percent lower than the comparable retail price. We are expanding availability of the commercial prices to commercial customers who pay postage using a permit imprint and approved software for mail preparation and customs-related functions.

What are the new Priority Mail International Flat Rate Envelope prices?

The Priority Mail International Flat Rate Envelope retail price will be \$9.95 for Canada and Mexico and \$11.95 for all other countries. Commercial base prices will be 5 percent below retail prices. The weight limit for the Priority Mail International Flat Rate Envelope remains 4 pounds.

What are the new prices for the Priority Mail International Flat Rate Boxes?

The retail prices for the regular flat-rate boxes (both shapes) will be \$23.95 for Canada and Mexico and \$38.95 for all other countries. The price of the large flat-rate box introduced March 3 remains \$29.95 for Canada and Mexico and \$49.95 for all other countries. Commercial base prices will be 5 percent below retail. The weight limit for all flat-rate boxes remains 20 pounds.

Other than the prices, are there any other changes to IPA and ISAL?

Yes. Published prices for ISAL direct shipment are eliminated and only available through customized agreements.

Are International Reply Coupons (IRCs) still available?

Yes, the selling price will be \$2.10 each. IRCs are exchangeable in any other Universal Postal Union member country for stamps equal to the minimum postage for an air letter.

Are there any significant changes to international mail extra services?

The structure of extra services is unchanged.

Proposed New Standards for Intelligent Mail Barcodes Available

An advance copy of the *Federal Register* notice proposing the use of Intelligent Mail barcodes on automation mailings of letters and flats was released April 16, and is available on Postal Explorer (pe.usps.com). This notice includes revised mailing standards for the use of Intelligent Mail barcodes effective May 2009 concurrent with the date that we implement the mailing services price change.

The comment period will extend 30 days from the date the notice appears in the *Federal Register*. When this issue of *MailPro* went to press, the notice still had not appeared in the *Federal Register*. We encourage mailers to review and comment on our proposal as soon as possible. Mailers may submit additional comments any time within the comment period.

On Jan. 7, 2008, we published in the *Federal Register* (Volume 73, Number 4) an advance notice of our intention to require the use of Intelligent Mail barcodes on all letters and flats mailed at automation prices as of January 2009. We presented our Intelligent Mail vision and asked for your comments. We described two options for using Intelligent Mail barcodes: the basic option and the full-service option. In this proposed rule, we have summarized comments received in response to the Jan. 7, notice and published our revised mailing standards for the use of Intelligent Mail barcodes.



This page is taken from the USPS web site and is very difficult to find. It does show that the USPS does **still** sell IRCs as required by membership of the UPU:

<http://www.usps.com/mailpro/2008/marapril/page12.htm>

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380 Supplemental Services

381 International Reply Coupons

381.1 Description

- a. The sender of a letter may prepay a reply by purchasing reply coupons that are sold and exchangeable for postage stamps by postal administrations in member countries of the Universal Postal Union.
- b. International reply coupons (in French *Coupons-Response Internationaux*) are printed in blue ink on paper that has the letters "UPU" in large characters in the watermark. The front of each coupon is printed in French. The reverse side of the coupon shows the text relating to its use in German, English, Arabic, Chinese, Spanish, and Russian.
- c. Coupons sold in the United States have the selling price printed on them while coupons in other countries may not.

381.2 Availability

Reply coupons may be requisitioned by Post Office facilities in the same manner as postage stamps. The coupons should be stocked at Post Office facilities that have a demand for them.

381.3 Selling Price and Exchange Value

- a. The selling price of a reply coupon in the United States is \$2.10. One coupon is exchangeable in any other member country for a stamp or stamps representing the minimum postage on an unregistered air letter. Unused U.S. coupons (that is those with the U.S. selling price stamped on them) may be exchanged only for United States postage stamps by the original purchaser at a discount of 1 cent below the purchase price.
- b. With the exceptions noted in [381.4d](#), international reply coupons purchased in foreign countries are exchangeable at U.S. Post Office facilities toward the purchase of postage stamps and embossed stamped envelopes at \$0.98 per coupon irrespective of the country where they were purchased.

381.4 Processing Requests

- a. When an international reply coupon is sold the Postal Service clerk must place a postmark in the block which is headed *control stamp of the country of origin*.
- b. Under Universal Postal Union's regulations member countries are *not* required to place a control stamp or postmark on the international reply coupons that they sell. Therefore some foreign issue reply coupons which are tendered for redemption may bear the name of the issuing country (generally in French) rather than the optional control stamp or postmark. Such coupons are exchangeable for U.S. postage as specified in [381.3b](#).
- c. A Post Office facility redeeming an unused U.S. coupon must postmark it in the unpostmarked circle. A Post Office facility exchanging a foreign reply coupon must postmark it in the right circle. Post Office facilities must not accept foreign coupons that already bear a Postal Service postmark.
- d. Effective January 1, 2010, the only valid version of the international reply coupons printed by the Universal Postal Union is Item Number 330800, which is approximately 3.75 inches by 6 inches, has a barcode on the reverse side, and has an expiration date of December 31, 2013. This policy is for international reply coupons issued by the United States as well as for those issued by foreign postal administrations.
- e. Reply coupons formerly issued by the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain are no longer valid. These coupons are printed in green ink and bear the caption *Cupon Respuesta America-Espanol*. Customers possessing any of these coupons should return them to their correspondents in the country of issue for redemption through the selling post office.
- f. Postmasters must process exchanged foreign and redeemed U.S. international reply coupons as prescribed in 11-6.6, International Reply Coupons, in Handbook F-101, *Field Accounting Procedures*.

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This important reference is taken from the USPS International Mail Manual (IMM). In case of difficulty, ask the server or postmaster to pull out this reference and go to Section 381 as shown. This page appears online at: http://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc3_026.htm . The redemption price (the equivalent of the first class international letter rate) is **98¢**.

**UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION
DOCUMENT**

The 41 member countries of the Council of Administration

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|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Algeria | <input type="checkbox"/> Kuwait |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argentina | <input type="checkbox"/> Libyan Jamahiriyah |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Azerbaijan | <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuania |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladesh | <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Belgium | <input type="checkbox"/> Nigeria |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Benin | <input type="checkbox"/> Panama (Rep.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Botswana | <input type="checkbox"/> Qatar |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Canada | <input type="checkbox"/> Russian Federation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cameroon | <input type="checkbox"/> Saudi Arabia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> China (People's Rep.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Senegal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Colombia | <input type="checkbox"/> Sweden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Congo (Rep.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Tanzania (United Rep.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cuba | <input type="checkbox"/> Thailand |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Egypt | <input type="checkbox"/> Trinidad and Tobago |
| <input type="checkbox"/> France | <input type="checkbox"/> Tunisia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Germany | <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Great Britain | <input type="checkbox"/> Ukraine |
| <input type="checkbox"/> India | <input type="checkbox"/> United Arab Emirates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Indonesia | <input type="checkbox"/> United States of America |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kazakhstan | <input type="checkbox"/> Uruguay |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kenya – Chairman | |



There are 191 member countries in the UPU, including the USA. The current council consists of that shown here (41 in number). Kenya is the current Chairman. The USA was the previous chairman for 5 years.

http://www.upu.int/ca/en/ca_member_countries_en.pdf UPU Members countries

http://www.upu.int/irc/en/irc_countries_list_en.pdf UPU Countries which sell IRCs

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_reply_coupon More about IRCs

<http://www.n6hb.org/s-a/irc.htm> Summary of IRCs from a radio perspective.