



# SELLER HOLIDAY SHIPPING GUIDE



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**Buyers are already gearing up for holiday shopping season — are you?**

Here are some consumer trends you might want to consider, along with tips and resources to make your holiday season as seamless as possible.

## **A holiday shopping season unlike any other**

**As millions of people have begun to adjust to a new lifestyle,** it's affected not only what they buy, but when they buy as well.

The holiday shopping season will press-on, online. Shoppers will shop online in record numbers this season, and start making purchases much earlier than in years past.

Your ability to meet that demand and ship on time can be the difference between a browse and a buy.

We've outlined some of the latest consumer trends, what they mean for shipping, and more importantly what you can do to make sure you're fully prepared to tackle the holiday shipping season.





# The holiday shopping season isn't just close, it's already here



“We have already seen significant holiday shopping behavior starting the end of Q3 – heading into Q4 ahead of previous years.”

Jen Deal,  
eBay Seller Marketing Manager

2020 has provided a lot of challenges for households, and to combat that they've started looking ahead – specifically, to the holidays. Buyers are making holiday purchases sooner than ever in 2020.

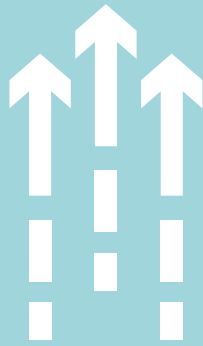
Pandemic-induced product scarcity has also taught consumers the value of buying early before items sell out.

The result?

“They're buying NOW.”

Jen Deal,  
eBay Seller Marketing Manager

Which means as a seller, you need to be ready to deliver.



“In the course of two weeks, we went from 17% of US retail being online, to 28% of US retail being online. In two weeks, we had the same amount of e-commerce growth as in the last 10 years.”

**Jordan Sweetnam**  
eBay Senior Vice President  
of Marketplaces



## Get ready for a record season of online shopping

We've seen a steady increase in online shopping compared to shopping at retail stores over the years.

Covid-19 is set to put that shift into hyperdrive this holiday season.

## The data backs it up

### ACCELERATION OF ONLINE

**85%**

of retailers believe online sales will increase this holiday season compared to last

**61%**

of retailers expect higher engagement & purchasing through social media channels

### DISCOUNT DEALS

**31%**

increase in page views in 2019

**65%**

order count rise in 2019



COVID-19 only looks set to exacerbate this

**GIFT RESEARCH** July (along with August and September) had one of the highest rates of User-Generated Content interaction, highlighting that shoppers are researching gifts online.

**CONSUMERS WANT ANSWERS** Accelerated customer submissions of reviews and questions have already been seen this year.



# Shipping as safe as possible

Our partner carriers, UPS®, FedEx® and USPS®, are continuing to develop ways to safely deliver packages to customers this holiday season. In addition to offering a variety of new services, they all offer discounted rates on eBay Labels.

## Delivery 7 Days a Week

FedEx Ground recently increased delivery to residences every day of the week (at no additional cost) from 76% to nearly 95% of the U.S. population. That means many of your shipments of residential packages will arrive on customers' doorsteps a day earlier, helping you set more accurate estimated delivery dates and increasing customer satisfaction.

## Contactless Pickup

USPS allows you to schedule a pick up time convenient for you in locations eligible for this service (more than 98% of zip codes are eligible) for free as long as it is during the hours of regular mail delivery. You do not have to be present when your USPS carrier picks up packages. You can let USPS know exactly where to look for packages by selecting the precise location you plan to leave your packages (i.e. porch, side door, mailroom, backdoor, office, reception, etc).

## Custom Delivery Options

Sellers can drop off their shipments at the over 22,000 UPS Access Point® locations. Shoppers select a [nearby location](#) if that's more helpful than sending shipments to their homes or offices and they can collect their shipments at a time suitable for their individual schedules. 92% of the U.S. population will live within 5 miles of a UPS Access Point location by the end of 2020.

For more information on the safest shipping practices, visit the [eBay Seller Center](#).



“eBay will be tenacious about staying on top of what’s going on so that we’re as on time for buyers as we can be during these times.”

Stuart Richenbach,  
eBay Senior Director of Shipping





# Carriers will be pushed like never before

Simply put, carriers are facing unprecedented demand. How they will respond remains to be seen, but as the holidays near, we expect that they will continue to have challenges and congestion in their networks. Here is what we are doing to help.



## **Do not extend your handling time**

We are automatically extending estimated delivery dates as necessary to give buyers a more reasonable expectation of when their items will arrive. Our extended estimates should give you enough buffer, and additional handling days could lead to the appearance of your items shipping slower than they actually are.

## **Communicate with your buyers**

By keeping in contact with your buyers throughout the shipping process, you can proactively address any foreseeable shipping delays. A simple “shipped your item today” message can let your buyer know you are following through on the handling time commitment.

## **Seller protections**

eBay announced seller protections against shipping defects and we will continue to review these protections as long as strains on carriers affect delivery dates. As long as you meet your handling time commitments, eBay will protect your qualification as a Top Rated Seller, as well as help mitigate shipping-related negative or neutral feedback on your behalf.



# What they might be buying (and you might be shipping)

Shelter-in-place orders have a lot of consumers focusing on ways to improve their home, whether it's through new decor, efficiency, or items that promote healthy living. A direct result of this is an increased demand for hard goods.

The Home & Garden category has seen tremendous growth recently. Eddie Chen, eBay General Manager of Hard Goods, North America, has identified some of the trendier items heading into the holiday season:

## Small Kitchen Appliances

Many holiday shoppers are preparing to host big meals from home for the first time. Products like air fryers, bread makers and even small cabinetry have all seen triple digit growth in search and listing since the start of Covid-19.

## Home Office

As people adjust to a new era of working from home, demand for home office equipment has continued to grow and we expect that to carry well into the holiday shopping season.

## Health and Fitness (Sporting Goods)

With gym membership dwindling, consumers are actively turning their homes into home gyms. Exercise equipment (including dumbbells, yoga mats and treadmill machines) are experiencing tremendous sales growth.

If you end up selling (and shipping) large or heavy items, be sure to check with your freight provider or carrier on the best practices for a smooth delivery. We recommend shipping with [eBay Preferred Carriers](#), to provide for a better buyer experience.



# What you can do to ensure smooth shipping

The holiday shopping season has already begun, and with an influx of online shoppers ready to buy, here's what you can do to help make your shipping as seamless as possible.

## **Provide clear, concise shipping information**

Reassure buyers by outlining your shipping policies for the holiday season. By showing them that you understand their concerns, they'll be more likely to buy. Highlight custom delivery instructions that buyers can take advantage of and encourage shoppers to buy earlier than usual.

## **Consider your inventory**

Buyers are shopping early to ensure that the products they want are still in stock and can be delivered on time. Can you and your suppliers meet that demand? Be honest and upfront.

## **Offer free shipping**

Free shipping is a great way to incentivize consumers and ease concern. If you offer free shipping, determine how to accommodate the cost of shipping into your listing price, and if you offer flat-fee shipping, use the eBay shipping calculator to determine a sensible rate.

## **Keep handling times under two days**

Extending them could cause unnecessary delays. Keep your handling time as short as possible and let eBay take care of the delivery estimates.

## **Additional insurance**

Consider purchasing additional insurance (available on eBay) for items over \$100 as this is the maximum most carriers include in the cost of shipment.





# Let eBay help you ship on time

eBay has many shipping resources that you can use to navigate the holiday season. All of this information (and more) can be found on the [eBay Seller Center](#).

## 1

eBay offers several convenient, free and low-cost shipping options:

Purchase [eBay-branded shipping supplies](#) to give your packages a professional look at a great price. Use these for any carrier.

Get free supplies from [UPS®](#), [FedEx®](#), or [USPS®](#).

## 2

Pack your item as if you were ready to ship it, but don't completely seal it yet so you can make any adjustments before sending it out. Weigh it, and be sure to measure its [dimensional weight](#) to capture its true cost.

## 3

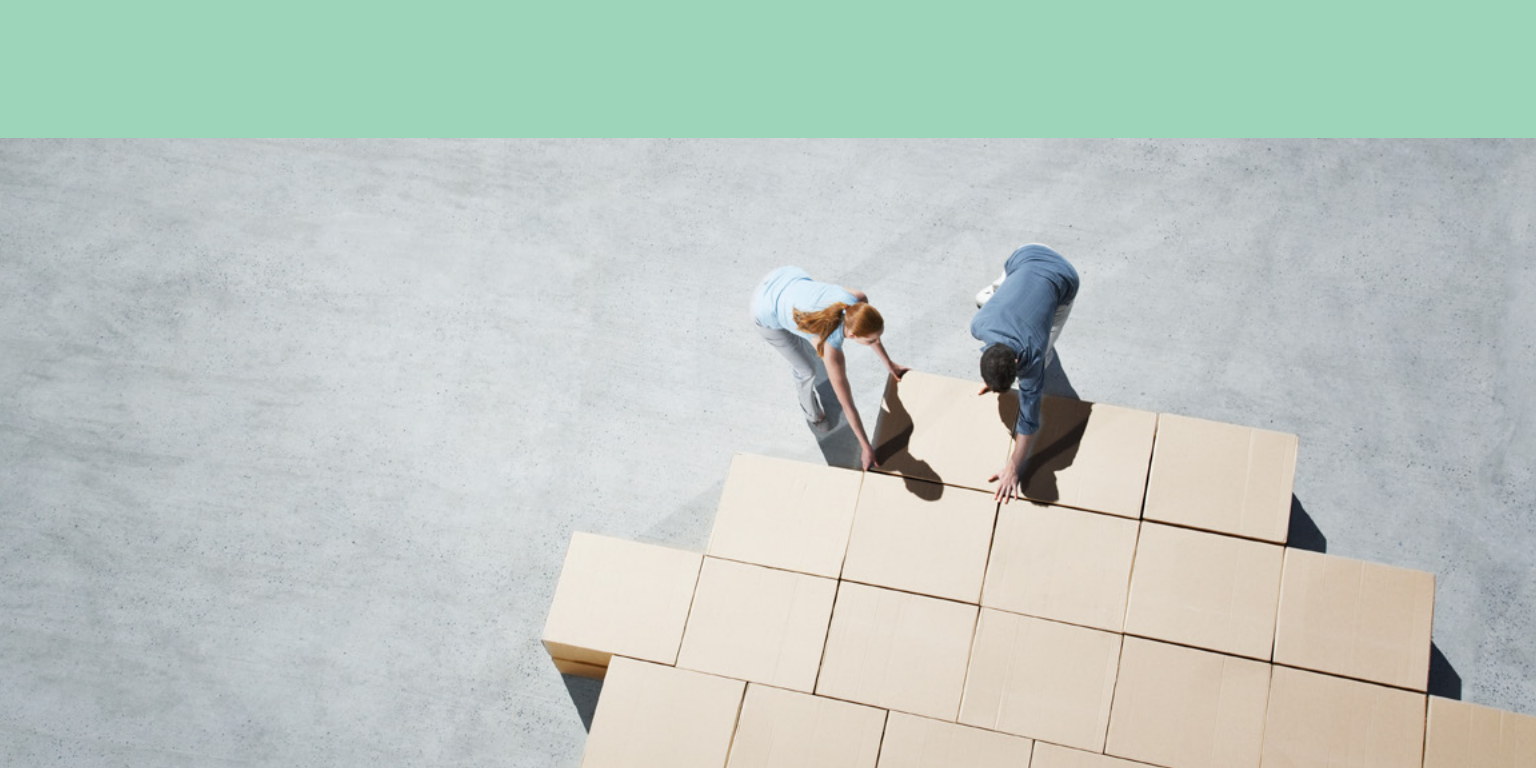
Use [eBay's Shipping Calculator](#). You've got the power of choice; our Shipping Calculator shows rates from UPS, FedEx, and USPS.

## 4

Go to the [Shipping Pages](#) on eBay Seller Center for all the latest information and details.



FYI: One carrier won't let you ship using another carrier's packaging. For example, don't use a FedEx box if you're shipping via UPS.



# What to consider this year with international shipping

International travel is down, but international shopping isn't. Grow your international sales with the help of eBay's international shipping resources. They're cost effective and outperform other carriers in reliability, availability and distance. Head over to the eBay Seller Center website for more information.

## eBay international delivery

This service is one of eBay's proprietary shipping solutions, reaching over 210 countries and offers shipping protection for items damaged or not received.

## eBay Global Shipping Program

Simply ship your item to eBay's Global Shipping Center in Kentucky, and the Program takes care of every single step until that item reaches its buyer.





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“Normal” might not be on the 2020 holiday shopping list, but that’s okay because buyers are searching and shopping earlier than ever and when they start shopping, you start shipping.

Help your buyers get the things that get them together this holiday season.

[eBay.com/seasonalplaybook](https://www.eBay.com/seasonalplaybook)

