

# Popular Threads on Solosez

## Postage- Stamps Or Metered?

Pardon if this has been threaded before. I know there have been threads about postage on the Internet. This is about ordering actual stamps from the Postal Service.

We recently experimented with ordering stamps at [www.usps.gov](http://www.usps.gov). The order came in the mail within 2 or 3 days, maybe just 2.

Customers can select from many sizes and designs, etc. and pay by setting up an account id and using a credit card. The delivery fee was \$1.00 for numerous sheets of self-stick stamps.

This procedure is going to save a lot of time at my office.

Rob Robertson, Austin, Texas

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Although I primarily use internet postage (Clickstamp.com), from time to time there is a need to use actual stamps.

For years we have been using postage prepaid envelopes available at the PO to order roll/s of stamps -- and no delivery fee. We just grab a bunch of them whenever there is some other reason to visit the PO, e.g., to pick up certified mail or whatever. I know a \$1 delivery charge is no big deal, but I prefer to have my assistant write a check & throw the order in the mail. The stamps arrive 3-5 business days later.

Patricia Joyce, Rhode Island

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If you only need a few stamps, COSTCO is cheaper than the USPS. At the checkout!

John J Kelly, Danbury, Connecticut

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Can you get a roll of 37 cent stamps like you can at the P.O.?

Barry W. Kaufman, Jacksonville, Florida.

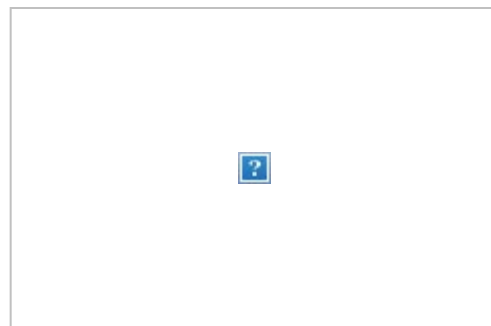
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Does anyone care about whether someone perceives a practice as "small time" because it uses stamps rather than a postage meter, or stamps.com? Curious minds want to know...

Scott

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I use stamps for two reasons. 1 - Its a lot easier and cheaper than using a meter. 2 - I don't freaking care if OC doesn't like my little stamps. Let



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them assume I am small time. That is their problem, not mine. Besides, it's a good old stamp. Who can really complain about it?

Jonathan G. Stein, Elk Grove, California

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I actually use stamps too. I don't care what OC thinks either. I try to buy stamps that coordinate with my stationery... so right now I am using the Henry Mancini Pink Panther stamps. Fun, eh?

Jennifer N. Sawday, Long Beach, California

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While the stamps sound cool, you're not using pink stationary, are you???

Veronica Schnidrig, Oregon

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I saw a post by Barry Kaufman that asked, "Can you get a roll of 37 cent stamps like you can at the P.O.?"

At the website I posted, [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), click on Buy Stamps & Shop. The site allows purchase of coils of 100 or selection of commemoratives in sheets, etc.

I use a variety of the commemoratives and pick the postage depending upon the addressee. For example, I select a \$.37 Thurgood Marshall on a letter to another attorney, judge, etc. (Recently, I received the annual Wall Street Journal subscriber survey which contained a survey, the usual crisp dollar bill and a return envelope. The envelope bore a big Ronald Reagan commemorative. I am sure that is no coincidence as most of those subscribers probably lean to Reagan policies.)

The other day, I received a check from the county treasurer out of the clear blue refunding a filing fee overpayment of \$65.00 from an ancient and now-closed case. I called the client to verify his address as he had relocated to Indiana. I was hoping he would say to keep the money but he wanted it. I used a postage stamp honoring a famous American member of his race on the envelope sending him the endorsed check. Come each Thanksgiving our big mailing uses neutral seasonal postage and not a meter or prepaid envelopes.

I would use a meter if my volume justified it, but the volume does not. Faced with the need to use stamps, I want the envelope to appear to be special mail and not appear like the vast majority I receive, junk mail. I give priority to certified mail and with a real stamp. Junk mail, with rare exceptions, does not bear \$.37 stamps.

Ordering by mail is cost-effective in many ways. What if your secretary has a collision while on the errand to the post office to reload the meter or purchase postage? Your workman's comp premium paid up? Did he/she negligently cause the crash? If yes, how many PI attorneys would overlook suing the employer?

Another cost-effective way of keeping out of traffic is to order virtually

every item in the office by Internet or telephone.

While on this topic, I have considered using postage prepaid return envelopes with my fee statements. A pet peeve of mine is to receive bills with no return envelope. I currently use #9 baby blue pre-addressed envelopes for clients to use for their payments and for court clerks to send back file-marked pleadings, orders, etc. I also use those to hand clients when asking them to send me something they forgot to bring to the interview, etc.

Rob Robertson, Austin, Texas

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You clearly have too much time on your hands, Rob. Time which could be better spent BBQing, writing posts to Solosez, or marketing your practice.

<g>

Sorry, folks. I'm one of those who maintains that it's important for solos to look uptown, and that means a postage meter.

jennifer j. rose, Morelia, Michoacán, Mexico

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Why is it important for us to look uptown? I am small, laid back and friendly. It's how I do everything. I don't even put on a tie unless I am going to court. Heck, I talked to my clients while I am catching a breather during my soccer game, if they happen to call then. Uptown just is not me. None of my clients have ever cared. I think that a stamp to them is more personal. And while I like some OC, I don't give a flying Wallenda (with apologies to Men's Health) what they think.

Jonathan G. Stein, Elk Grove, California

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Trey Ryder favors stamps instead of mechanical postage: "Step #13: Use stamps on outgoing envelopes. Any mechanical method that applies postage tends to depersonalize the envelope. But when you use stamps, you draw attention to the fact that the postage was applied by a person."

Joyce Maughan, Salt Lake City, Utah

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I disagree. I think the impression the client gets from posted postage vs. stamps is important. I know people here disagree with me, but stamps tell the world you are operating from your basement. There is nothing wrong with that, but it's not something most want publicized.

Meyer Silber, New York, New York

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I agree with Meyer on this one, although Trey's newsletter is good for many things. As Marzydoats said - the most important thing is to know your clients -. If the majority of your clients need the warm cozy of a licked stamp, then lick stamps. If the business owner's receptionist opens the mail, nobody cares. If a mix, then what do you want to look like? A

business or a shop? YMMV.

Ted A. Waggoner, Rochester, Indiana

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Meyer, I don't know what language you are using to communicate, but I have never thought less about companies sending the stamped mail I receive. truth be told I seldom even notice the envelope. I just glance at the return address before ripping it open. I know in many companies, the actual recipients don't even get to form an opinion about the envelope since it's opened and discarded in the mail room. It's important to realize that your own personal experiences influence your perceptions. Others may not see things the way you do. Not other lawyers and especially not laymen.

Peter Turai, Freehold, New Jersey

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I operate out of my wonderful basement office. So, I guess I am not a good lawyer and don't give great service to my clients. On the other hand, one reason I moved my office to my home is to do away with overhead. Why would I want to add to my overhead by renting a postage machine that can do the same thing I can do with my thumb? PUT POSTAGE ON A LETTER!!!!!! And for those horrible trips to the post office. Every time I go to the post office, I run into a client or possible client. Better hurry right out and rent that Pitney Bowes ripoff machine. And move out of my basement.

Grant D. Griffiths, Clay Center, Kansas

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I use stamps, unapologetically. I am about 5 minutes from the local post office; I typically buy 200 stamps at a shot, and that lasts me a month or two. I also run into clients there. Now, it is a pain in the neck sometimes if they are crowded, and I have to wait 15 minutes for service, but even there, all I have to do is put a check for the correct amount in my mailbox made out to Postmaster and a note to my carrier that I need 50 37 cent stamps, or whatever, and if she's got them today, she'll take the check and leave the stamps; if she doesn't she'll take the check and leave me the stamps tomorrow. How difficult is that?

As far as "impressions" go, long story short is one lawyer asked me to send him some documents. Big time law firm up in Tallahassee. He said he'd be happy to pay postage and copying costs; I had a spare set of copies and sent him the stuff along with a cover letter saying "I don't know what the postage will be, but look at the envelope and reimburse me for the postage:". I got a call from his secretary about a week later asking what the postage was; I said, I don't remember, but it should be right on the envelope. She said "Oh, the envelope was thrown out before it got to my desk". Point is, no one looks at envelopes.

Ronald A. Jones, Florida

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Meyer: I respectfully disagree. I am operating from a very nice suite on the

top floor of a local office building -- I can see Recreation Park golf course, the Pacific Ocean, Catalina Island and the palm trees that line Belmont Shore from my window. I choose to use stamps because it only takes a second to apply and I am not wasting my precious operating dollars on a postage meter. I buy stamps after hours -- my baby and I go for a walk (which I need the fresh air) and we go to the post office once a month. Pretty easy.

Jennifer N. Sawday, Long Beach, California

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I don't disagree that stamps are easy or that you like the air or that you meet clients. I also did NOT slam home offices (read the friggen' post). I do, however, know that first impressions are absolutely key in any business built on relationships. Think about it. You get two envelopes which contain a 10 page detailed solicitation of your business. Something you have requested and are interested in reading. One comes typed, franked and in a 10 x13 envelope. The other has a handwritten address, has three stamps across the top corner and its stuffed into a regular #10 envelope. Are you telling me that you have not already formed an opinion? C'mon. This is an extreme example, and I am sure that the stamp is not the deal killer, but I stand behind my post.

One caveat. Included in my rent is the use of the postage machine, I don't pay for it, just the postage used.

Meyer Silber, New York, New York

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What the heck comes franked? Unless I get something that says "Ball Park" nothing is franked in my house or office. Okay, seriously. What's it mean?

Jonathan G. Stein, Elk Grove, California

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Meyer, you need an apples-apples comparison but are using apples-oranges.

Suppose both proposals come in a 10x13, both have typed labels, one has a postage meter and one has stamps. Which is better? Door A, Door B, or a tie?

Whatever your answer, the comparison is more apt. The use of stamps should not imply sloppy administrative practice.

Mike Riddle, Papillion, Nebraska

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You are right and I did not say or imply sloppy. I guess it's just me.

Meyer Silber, New York, New York

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I still use a stamp. I have a sixty cent stamp that I use plus a larger \$3.85

stamp that I use for the priority mail rate & larger packages. My mailings are all printed -- who says a stamp means it has to be handwritten?

Jennifer N. Sawday, Long Beach, California

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I don't remember anyone saying they wrote in their own handwriting the address on the envelop. I also do not believe just because someone uses "stamps" they will stuff the same amount of material in a #10 envelop where you might use a 10x13 envelop. In fact, I checked my supplies and I actually have some of those. We can get those in Kansas. As far as addresses on those big 10x13's, I actually use a Dymo 330 LabelWriter. Wonderful little machine and it is a lot better than handwriting my labels. Heck, I don't even use custom made letterhead. I have a Mac, I do my letterhead on my computer and print it with my laser printer. LIMIT OVERHEAD, wonderful concept. And you know, I have never had a client, even one of my business clients, tell me that man, you don't use embossed letterhead. I am sorry if you took my reply wrong. However, your comment show a lack of respect for those of us who practice out of our home for what ever reason. I have a thriving practice that is very profitable and more so since I did away with overhead. If we can not show respect for each other, no matter what the tone; why should the general public have any respect for us? Why not tell lawyer jokes all day on the golf course? It is rather troubling that it would seem that some lawyers have more of a problem with a lawyer that has a home office than his clients or the general public does. My clients appreciate the fact that since I have no overhead to speak of, I am able to better control cost and can even lower their bill. Law firms are getting almost as bad as banks in their race to keep up with the Jones. Let's hurry and see who can have the nicest office downtown. Maybe this is why our clients are requesting, no demanding, alternative billing away from the hourly rates that have been so inflated for so long by some firms. I will make a promise if you will, I will not slam non-home office lawyers if you will remember that an attorney that practices out of his or her home can give just as good of service and provide that secret first impression you mention, that is so important. Even if we happen to use "real stamps" and not a postage meter.

Grant D. Griffiths, Clay Center, Kansas

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I apologize if I offended you or your practice.

Meyer Silber, New York, New York

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