

Time running out to get packages delivered by Christmas

By Bill Lindelof, Sacramento Bee

Today is likely to be the busiest mailing day of the year for the U.S. Postal Service – and private shippers will also be busy moving millions of parcels. There is still time to mail, but Christmas is drawing close.

Ralph Petty, spokesman for the Postal Service in Sacramento, suggests people use priority mail to make sure packages get to their destination. Priority mail gets to its destination in two or three days. Express mail is even faster: overnight delivery to most areas in the country.

Sacramento-area postal workers will process about 2.4 million cards, letters and packages today. Normally, workers would handle 700,000 in a day. FedEx expects to handle a record-breaking 280 million packages worldwide between Thanksgiving and Christmas, an increase of 13 percent from last year.

Here's holiday numbers courtesy of the U.S. Postal Service:

- 237 is the number years the Postal Service had been delivering holiday greetings.
- 17.9 billion cards, letters and packages will be delivered between Thanksgiving and New Year's eve.
- 685 million pieces delivered today, the busiest mailing day of 2012.
- mail carriers service more than 150 million American homes, businesses and post office boxes, delivering nearly 40 percent of the world's mail.

- 170,000 vehicles are needed to transport the mail.
- 242 million people visit a post office during the holidays.