

Tariffs, De Minimis, and the Postal Duty Rate

A look at some basic facts



Until the federal appeals court rules – and a likely Supreme Court decision – the Executive Orders (EOs) that impose tariffs on imports and eliminate the de minimis exemption for China and Hong Kong remain in place.

Thus, the postal duty on goods mailed from China and Hong Kong also remains in effect.

Information current as of June 9, 2025.

What is the de minimis exemption?

Definition

The value under which a good may enter the U.S. without paying duties and with simplified procedures.

Threshold

Since 2016, the de minimis value in the U.S. has been \$800, one person per day. Each country sets its own de minimis value.

April 2, 2025

The President’s EO 14256 terminated this exemption for goods made in China and Hong Kong.

Impact on Other Countries

For now, the de minimis exemption remains in place for goods from all other countries.

Why a postal duty?

Existing methods to collect and remit tariffs on mailed packages were insufficient to "expediently process and collect tariff revenue."

The EOs established this postal duty so that the postal channel would not have an advantage over commercial entry of goods.

How does the postal duty work?

Only applicable to goods from China or Hong Kong sent via China Post or Hongkong Post.

Ad valorem rate of duty of 54% per item or \$100 per postal package.

The postal duty is in lieu of all other duties and taxes.

EO 14298 deleted the per-package increase that was set for June 1.

Carrier (airline or vessel) collects and remits the duties to Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

The carrier must use the same method for all items from China Post and Hongkong Post for the month.

Country of origin is the determining factor.

CN- and HK-origin goods sent via another country’s postal operator incur the 30%++ duties.

See note below.

The goods clear U.S. customs under formal clearance.

CBP sends U.S. recipient a letter informing them on how to get a broker and pay duties and taxes.

De minimis is unavailable for CN/HK-origin goods regardless of the country of shipment.

Note:

EO 14298 cut the 145% tariffs the U.S. had earlier imposed on Chinese imports to 30% (a baseline 10% plus the "fentanyl tariffs" of 20%) until August 12. The duties are still stacked, meaning tariffs such as most-favored nation (MFN) and Section 301 tariffs remain in effect.

Other Resources:

Federal Register: 2025 Donald J. Trump Executive Orders

U.S. Customs and Border Protection: E-Commerce Frequently Asked Questions