



Settle. Seoul

EVERYDAY LIFE · INDIVIDUAL ARTICLE PDF

Sending & receiving parcels in Korea.

Korea Post, DHL and FedEx, customs declarations and your Personal Customs Clearance Code (PCCC).

Settle Seoul 2027 · Reviewed October 2026 · Read online: www.settleseoul.com/articles/sending-and-receiving-parcels-in-korea

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Links in this PDF open the official source or the online guide. Opening hours, prices, programmes and access rules change — confirm with the responsible operator before you travel.

THE ESSENTIALS

- Your PCCC (개인통관고유부호, gaein tonggwan goyu buho) is for goods coming INTO Korea — you normally don't need it to post a parcel out.
- Describe contents honestly on every customs form; gifts and used items still need a declaration.
- Postage, thresholds and PCCC rules change — check the official sites before you send or buy.

Official routes: Your phone is your identity · Shopping & setting up home · Spend less, live well: smart shopping in Seoul · Forms & documents.

CHOOSE A SERVICE

Korea Post, DHL or FedEx?

Korea Post (우체국, ucheguk) is the national postal service and usually the cheapest way to send personal parcels. Private express couriers such as DHL Express and FedEx cost more but add door-to-door pickup and faster, time-definite delivery. Not every service runs to every country, and prices depend on actual and volumetric weight.

Korea Post

- EMS — faster tracked service for documents, gifts and urgent parcels.
- International air parcel — often cheaper than EMS for ordinary items.
- Surface parcel — slow but potentially much cheaper for heavy, non-urgent boxes (where available).
- Small packet / K-Packet — small, light eligible items.
- Use the official EMS postage & delivery time calculator (ems.epost.go.kr, English) to check price and availability; a quoted price does not guarantee the service is available.

DHL Express / FedEx

- Best for urgent original documents: degree certificates, apostilles, contracts, embassy paperwork.
- Pickup can be booked online from home or work, so you don't carry a heavy box to the post office.
- Useful when an EMS route is limited or you need higher declared-value cover.
- Usually the most expensive option — get a quote on the official site first.

Rule of thumb

Cheapest: Korea Post surface or air. Balanced: EMS. Fastest door-to-door for vital documents: DHL or FedEx.

SENDING ABROAD

Posting a parcel from Korea

You can send a parcel abroad even with very little Korean. Bring the full addresses and know what is inside.

1. **Pack** — Use a sturdy box; many post offices sell them. Don't seal items that may need inspection until you've checked the rules.
2. **Addresses** — Recipient's full name, street address, city, postcode, country and phone number — plus your Korean return address and mobile number.
3. **Choose** — Ask to compare EMS, air and surface parcel, or get a DHL/FedEx quote for urgent documents.
4. **Declare** — List contents, quantity, weight, value and purpose on the customs declaration.
5. **Pay and track** — Check the address on the receipt, keep the tracking number and follow it on the carrier's site.

At the counter

이거 해외로 보내고 싶어요 (Igeo haeoero bonaego sipeoyo) — “I want to send this overseas.” 배송비가 얼마예요? (Baesongbiga eolmayeyo?) — “How much is shipping?” 더 저렴한 방법이 있나요? (Deo jeoryeomhan bangbeobi innayo?) — “Is there a cheaper option?” 이 물건을 보낼 수 있나요? (I mulgeoneul bonael su innayo?) — “Is this item allowed?” 운송장 번호를 알려주시겠어요? (Unsongjang beonhoreul allyeojusigesseyoyo?) — “Can I have the tracking number?”

PAPERWORK

Completing a customs declaration

International parcels containing goods generally need a declaration, even for gifts and used belongings. Korea Post uses CN22 (short form, certain mail items) and CN23 (detailed form, used for merchandise via EMS); couriers use their own waybill and, for goods, a commercial or pro-forma invoice.

Illustrative example only

- Contents: Used cotton T-shirts
- Quantity: 3
- Declared value: USD 30
- Weight: 0.8 kg
- Category: Gift (only if genuinely a gift)
- Country of origin: where they were actually made

Declaration rules

- Avoid vague words like “stuff”, “personal items” or “miscellaneous”.
- Give realistic values — never mark purchases as gifts to avoid tax.
- Commercial goods may need an invoice and tariff (HS) classification.
- The destination country may still charge duty even if everything was declared correctly.

YOUR CUSTOMS CODE

Getting and using a PCCC

The Personal Customs Clearance Code (개인통관고유부호, gaein tonggwan goyu buho) identifies you when personal goods enter Korea. It starts with P followed by 12 digits. Foreign residents ordering from overseas retailers should use it rather than an ARC or passport number.

How to get one

- Open the official Korea Customs PCCC portal (ecos.customs.go.kr) — an English interface is available.
- Choose new code issuance (개인통관고유부호 신규발급, singyu balgeup).
- Complete identity verification, then enter name, address, phone and email.
- Check the details match those you use when ordering.

Newcomer catch

- Online verification usually needs a Korean phone in your own name or other local authentication.
- If you've just arrived and don't have your residence card or own-name phone yet, online issuance may fail.
- Options: wait until your phone is verified, or follow the portal's guidance on applying at a customs office.
- See “Your phone is your identity”.

The official PCCC portal (since 28 August 2026)

- Services: issuance (발급, balgeup), lookup (조회, johoe), updating details (수정, sujeong), renewal (갱신, gaengsin), import history (통관내역, tonggwan naeyeok) and misuse reporting (도용 신고, doyong singo).
- New or updated codes may require one-time email verification at participating checkouts.
- Codes now have validity periods — renew within the window shown on the portal, or the code may be cancelled.
- If you spot imports you didn't make in your history, report misuse on the portal.

At checkout

Look for fields labelled PCCC, Personal Customs Clearance Code, Customs ID or 개인통관고유부호. Enter the code of the person actually receiving the goods; mismatched names or phone numbers cause delays.

RECEIVING

Post versus courier: how parcels clear customs

Postal items (Korea Post / overseas postal services) and express courier shipments (DHL, FedEx and others) clear customs through different procedures. Many low-value, straightforward items clear on the sender's information; others need you to respond.

Arriving by post

- If held, you may get a notice to file a simplified postal clearance application (국제우편물 간이통관 신청서, gukje upyeonmul gani tonggwan sincheongseo).
- Apply through UNI-PASS or the Mobile Customs app (모바일 관세청, mobail gwansecheong), following the notice.
- Have the tracking number, invoice or order confirmation, item description, shipping cost and purpose ready.
- Korea Post lists a separate customs-handling surcharge for certain taxable inbound items.

Arriving by DHL / FedEx

- Couriers handle express clearance (특송통관, teuksong tonggwan) for you.
- Expect a text, email or KakaoTalk message asking for your PCCC or invoice — confirm it is genuine via the courier's official site.
- If duty or VAT is due, the courier may pay it on your behalf and add its own handling or disbursement fee — check its current Korea fee page.
- Reply promptly so the parcel isn't held.

POSTAL CLEARANCE

Filing a simplified postal declaration

If customs holds a postal item and sends you a notice, you can usually submit the simplified clearance application online through UNI-PASS. Alternatively, the official Mobile Customs app (모바일 관세청, mobail gwansecheong) provides a postal simplified-clearance function. Follow the current instructions on your customs notice, since online menus and submission requirements can change.

1. **Enter the item** — Enter the postal item number and the arrival details from your notice.
2. **Review** — Check the retrieved shipment matches your parcel.

3. **Declare** — Complete the application: declared contents, value, shipping charges and purpose of receipt.

4. **Verify** — Complete identity verification and submit, then keep your confirmation.

Example form

Korea Customs publishes a Korean-language declaration form (customs.go.kr/download/Customs_Declaration_Form_01.pdf) showing the information required — contents, value, shipping charges, purpose and applicant details. Use the latest form or online procedure specified in your actual notice. For restricted products, commercial shipments or goods needing a formal import declaration, a licensed customs broker (관세사, gwansesa) may be necessary.

DUTY

Will I pay customs duty?

A common starting point for personal imports is a US\$150 threshold, with a special US\$200 limit for eligible express list-clearance shipments from the United States. Rules differ by shipping method, origin and product — these are guidelines, not a tax-free allowance.

General guidance

- Personal postal gift around US\$80 — normally exempt if requirements are met.
- Personal parcel around US\$200 — may be subject to duty and VAT.
- Alcohol, certain foods, supplements and restricted items — special rules apply regardless of value.
- Use Korea Customs' official overseas-purchase tax estimator before buying something expensive.

RESTRICTIONS

What causes problems

A product sold legally in Korea is not necessarily allowed in the mail. Check Korea Post or the courier's restrictions — and the destination country's — before you buy something to send.

Check before sending

- Perfume and aerosols — often barred from air mail.
- Lithium batteries, power banks and electronics.
- Food, meat, seeds and plants — quarantine rules.
- Alcohol — postal limits and destination taxes.
- Medicine and supplements — permits and quantity limits.
- Cosmetics and liquids; expensive electronics and jewellery (insurance and valuation).

PROBLEMS

Tracking, held parcels and scam messages

“Customs clearance in progress” usually just means routine processing. If it persists or a notice arrives, check recipient details, proof of value, outstanding duties and whether the contents need approval. Don't ignore a formal notice — storage, return and disposal deadlines can apply.

Beware fake messages

- Scam texts claim a parcel is held or that a fee is due.
- Check the tracking number yourself on the official Korea Post, Customs, DHL or FedEx site.
- Never pay through an unexpected link or enter card details from a text.

Helplines

- Korea Post customer service: 1588-1300
- Korea Customs enquiries: 125
- DHL and FedEx: use the contact page on their official Korea websites.

SOURCES

Sources & verification • Sending & receiving parcels in Korea

Reviewed October 2026. Check the official links before relying on dates, fees or rules.

- [Korea Post \(English\)](https://www.epost.go.kr/main.retrieveMainPage.comm)
<https://www.epost.go.kr/main.retrieveMainPage.comm>
- [Korea Post EMS: postage & delivery time calculator \(English\)](https://ems.epost.go.kr/front.EmsDeliveryDelivery09.postal?langtype=en)
<https://ems.epost.go.kr/front.EmsDeliveryDelivery09.postal?langtype=en>
- [Korea Customs Service \(English\)](https://www.customs.go.kr/english/main.do)
<https://www.customs.go.kr/english/main.do>
- [Korea Customs Service: official PCCC portal \(English available\)](https://ecos.customs.go.kr/ecp/index.do)
<https://ecos.customs.go.kr/ecp/index.do>
- [Korea Customs UNI-PASS \(clearance, tracking\)](https://unipass.customs.go.kr/)
<https://unipass.customs.go.kr/>
- [Korea Customs: sample customs declaration form \(Korean, PDF\)](https://www.customs.go.kr/download/Customs_Declaration_Form_01.pdf)
https://www.customs.go.kr/download/Customs_Declaration_Form_01.pdf
- [DHL Express Korea](https://www.dhl.com/kr-en/home.html)
<https://www.dhl.com/kr-en/home.html>
- [FedEx Korea](https://www.fedex.com/en-kr/home.html)
<https://www.fedex.com/en-kr/home.html>

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