

Hands on Stamps: Special Delivery Stamps

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A postal packet sent Special Delivery was delivered to the recipient immediately on receipt at the nearest post office rather than waiting for the next regular distribution, which provided much faster mail delivery.^{1,2} The United States Postal Service offered special delivery from 1885 to 1997, when it was replaced by the Priority Mail and Express Mail services.²

Special Delivery service required an additional stamp demonstrating that the extra service had been purchased along with the necessary regular postage.² Passing a letter from hand to hand is the prominent feature on the Special Delivery stamps issued in 1954 (Fig. 1). A special feature of the stamp is that it includes the image of a stamp. A 30-cent stamp with the identical image was published in 1957.



FIGURE 1: A postal carrier handing a letter to a recipient's hand. The stamp itself along with a regular postage stamp is affixed to the envelope. Country: United States of America. Occasion: Special Delivery service. Scott Catalogue # E 20. Day of issue: October 13, 1954. Value: 20 cents.

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