

Your Holiday Tipping Guide: Who to Tip and How Much

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Who Should Get a Holiday Tip

There are no hard and fast rules on who to tip, but an extra gratuity can be appropriate for any person who provides a service on a regular basis. These include the following, among others.

- Delivery drivers.
- Babysitters or nannies.
- Doormen and building managers.
- Maintenance workers such as handymen, housekeepers, pool cleaners, trash collectors and landscapers.
- Pet walkers, groomers and sitters.
- Hair stylists and beauticians.

You may end up with a long list of people to potentially tip, but you are under no obligation to do so. Create a budget and then prioritize based on whose services you use most frequently.

How Much to Tip for the Holidays

Holiday tips can vary depending on the service, your relationship with the worker and regional customs. It should be something more meaningful than just your change.

The following represent pre-pandemic holiday tipping standards:

- Restaurant delivery drivers: 20% of total bill or \$5, whichever is higher.
- Babysitter or nanny: One evening or one week's pay, respectively.
- Hairstylist or beautician: Equivalent to one visit.
- Doorman: \$20 to \$100, depending on the level of service provided.
- Maintenance workers such as housekeepers and landscapers: One week's pay.
- Handyman: \$20 to \$100.
- Newspaper delivery: \$10 to \$30.
- Trash collection: \$10 to \$25 per person, if allowed.
- Dog walker: One day or week's pay.
- Dog groomer: Equivalent to one visit.

Consider how much effort a person puts into their work when determining tip amounts.

The pandemic has made it difficult for some to complete their work as usual, which means deliveries may be delayed or services altered. However, make allowances for extenuating circumstances when tipping.

Tipping Advice for Delivery Drivers

Delivery drivers have played a vital role this year as many families opted to shop from home. If you want to provide a holiday tip for your regular delivery men and women, here are some guidelines for major carriers:

- U.S. Postal Service: Government ethical standards prohibit postal carriers from accepting gifts of cash or gift cards. However, they can receive gift items with a value up to \$20 for a special occasion such as Christmas.
- FedEx: Employees can receive gifts valued up to \$75 but may not accept cash or gift cards.
- UPS: Delivery drivers may accept small gifts or nominal gratuities.

Meanwhile, many food and grocery delivery workers are able to accept tips. If you order from a service that charges a delivery fee, don't assume that goes to the person who drops off your order. There is a difference between a delivery charge and a gratuity.

When to Gift Rather Than Tip

While everyone can use money, a cash tip may not be appropriate in all situations. It changes the relationship once you introduce money.

As a result, you may not want to tip people you don't normally pay directly. These can include the following:

- Co-workers, supervisors and bosses.
- Teachers, principals and school staff.
- Long-term care facility workers.

What's more, there are some professionals who may not be able to accept tips either because of ethical or employer restrictions. These workers may include:

- Public service and government workers.
- Health care workers.
- Lawyers.
- Accountants and financial advisors.

For all the above workers, a gift may be more appropriate than a tip.

Given the ongoing pandemic, this may not be the best year to give homemade baked goods. However, it might be a good time to support local, small businesses by purchasing artisan items for gifting.