

Our Top 10 Do's & Don'ts

for Brands Preparing for the New €3 Customs Charge from July 1st 2026

#1 DO

Understand who is actually paying the fee

- ✓ The responsibility of the €3 customs duty fee falls with the seller or declarant not the receiver.
- ✓ In practice brokers or shippers may pay this on behalf of the declarant so be sure that you have the necessary agreements or POA in place.
- ✓ If the customer suddenly sees an unexpected customs/admin charge at delivery, expect abandoned baskets, refused parcels, and customer service issues.
- ✓ Map out clearly whether the fee is absorbed by the brand, carrier, marketplace, or end customer and communicate it early.

#2 DON'T

Try to shoehorn your current B2C flow into a B2B2C solution

- ✗ A B2B2C model changes the operational, customs, VAT, and customer ownership dynamics.
- ✗ Of course, a genuine B2B2C model with bona fide EU trading entity, legitimate transfer pricing and local sales and fulfilment is workable.
- ✗ Anything short of this is a huge risk and may create delays, compliance risks, fees and penalties as well as a poor customer experience when forced into a reseller/importer structure.

#3 DO

Understand the difference between H1 and H7 clearance

The customs model you choose will directly impact cost, speed, data requirements, and eligibility.

H7 (typically IOSS)

- Designed for low-value consignments
- Simpler data requirements
- Faster and lower cost in many scenarios
- Best suited to eligible low-value e-commerce shipments

H1

- Full customs declaration
- More data intensive
- Potentially higher processing and admin costs
- Required for shipments outside H7 eligibility

Choosing the wrong model can create postal and operational expense or customs friction.

#4 DON'T

Don't think you need to change everything at once

Take a "safety first" approach.... there is no sandbox for this
Avoid simultaneously changing:

- customs process
- delivery partners
- VAT setup
- checkout experience
- returns flow
- routing logic

The final implementation and operational guidance is yet to be published. Many postal operators are yet to confirm a process. Phase changes carefully so gaps can be identified and any problems can be isolated quickly.

#5 DO

DO model the total landed cost impact

The €3 charge is only part of the equation.
Brands should model:

- Customs processing fees
- Carrier admin fees
- VAT implications
- Delivery and returns costs

Sometimes the operational overhead costs more than the charge itself.

#6 DON'T

Assume all carriers will handle the change the same way

Different carriers and postal operators will implement processes differently. Compare:

- H1 vs H7 capabilities
- DDP support
- Fee payment/collection methods
- Transit performance
- Clearance automation
- Returns handling

Carrier strategy may become a competitive advantage.

#7 DO

DO audit your product data quality

Poor HS codes, inaccurate values, or inconsistent product descriptions will create customs issues fast. Now is the time to improve:

- HS classification accuracy
- SKU descriptions
- Valuation logic
- Country of origin data

Clean data reduces clearance delays and intervention rates.

#8 DON'T

DON'T surprise customers at checkout or delivery

Unexpected charges destroy conversion and trust.
Be transparent about:

- Duties and taxes
- Admin fees
- Delivery timelines
- Returns implications

A slightly higher upfront price is often better than surprise delivery charges.

#9 DO

DO pressure test your returns process

Many brands focus on outbound customs but ignore reverse logistics.
Understand:

- Can the fee be refunded
- Re-import implications
- Return shipping economics
- Customer expectations

Clean data reduces clearance delays and intervention rates.

#10 DON'T

DON'T wait until the last minute

July implementation timelines will create pressure across:

- Carriers
- Customs brokers
- Tech providers
- Marketplaces
- Warehouse operations

Brands that test early will have more routing flexibility and fewer CX related issues.



The Winning Strategy

The brands that handle this transition best will treat it as a customer experience challenge, an operational design exercise, and a compliance project, not just "another customs fee."