

2.6 NOTES ON 1918 WAR SURCHARGES

Two PTRTs contain the instructions for adding a war surcharge to postal charges to be paid for mail sent within Hungary. The first introduces it for domestic mail and to mail out to Axis-occupied areas, to be incurred from 15 June 1918, and the second to incoming mail from Axis occupied territories into Hungary applied in three stages from 1 September 1918 to 1 October 1918, the latter presumably being charged postage due to the recipient.

PTRT 53, 29.05.1918: War surcharge on postal items, telegrams and long-distance telephone calls.

Starting from **June 15** of the current year, the following war surcharges shall be levied for the postal items, telegrams and long-distance telephone calls listed below, in addition to the current rates:

- 1.a) **For letters:** For ordinary and registered letters to the interior (both long-distance and local traffic), to Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, Bulgaria, the territories of Russian-Poland, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania occupied by the Hungarian-Austrian troops, and finally to the German General Government in Warsaw and the territory of the German Eastern Command, 5 *fillér* per piece, regardless of the weight of the letter. The same for closed postcards (letter cards).

So, the letter rate will be in the above relationships:

Up to 20 grams 15 *fillér* + 5 *fillér* = 20 *fillér*,

For every additional 20 grams over 20 grams, the regular 5 *fillér*.

For example, for a letter to be sent domestically, weighing 18 grams, the following applies: regular rate 15 *fillér*, plus a 5 *fillér* war surcharge, totalling 20 *fillér* (in local circulation 10+5 = 15 *fillér*); the rate for a letter weighing 60 grams: after 20 grams 15 *fillér* + 2 × 5 *fillér* for the additional 40 grams and the uniform 5 *fillér* war surcharge, totalling 30 *fillér*; for a registered letter to Germany, weighing 175 grams, the following applies: regular rate 55 *fillér*, registration fee 25 *fillér*, war surcharge 5 *fillér*, totalling 85 *fillér*.

- b) **For postcards:** For 8-*fillér* postcards issued by the post office and to the countries and territories listed under point a), the fee is 2 *fillér* per piece. For reply postcards, the same fee is charged for the reply card.

So, for example, for a postcard to Austria, the fee is: regular fee of 8 *fillér*, plus 2 *fillér* war surcharge, totalling 10 *fillér*; for a reply postcard, the fee is: regular fee of 16 *fillér*, plus 4 *fillér* war surcharge, totalling 20 *fillér*.

For simple and reply postcards issued by private industry, which are currently also subject to a fee of 10 and 20 *fillér* respectively, war surcharges are not yet collected.

- c) **For printed matter:** For printed matter destined for the interior, Austria, Bosnia - Herzegovina, Germany, the field post offices, the territories of Russia-Poland, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania occupied by the Hungarian-Austrian troops, and finally for the territory of the German General Government in Warsaw and the German Eastern Command, per piece, if the weight of the form does not exceed 50 grams, 2 *fillér*, and if it exceeds 50 grams, 5 *fillér*.

So, for example, for a printed matter item destined for the interior, weighing 30 grams, the following applies: the regular fee is 3 *fillér*, plus a 2 *fillér* war surcharge, for a total of 5 *fillér*; and for a printed matter item weighing 680 grams, the following applies: the regular fee is 42 *fillér*, plus a 5 *fillér* war surcharge, for a total of 47 *fillér*. In contrast, the 2-*fillér* urgent fee charged for printed matter will remain unchanged for domestic, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Austrian circulation, but no urgent fee will be charged for printed matter destined for Germany, the German Government General in Warsaw and the territory of the German Eastern Command as of June 15 of the current year.

- d) **For samples:** For samples destined for domestic use: 5 *fillér* for samples weighing up to 50 grams, this fee is not charged for samples weighing more than 50 grams.

So, for example, for a sample destined for domestic use weighing 43 grams, the regular fee is 5 *fillér*, plus a 5 *fillér* war surcharge, a total of 10 *fillér*. For samples destined for any destination outside the country, there is no war surcharge.

- e) **For printed matter and samples packaged together:** for domestic use, 5 *fillér* for samples weighing up to 50 grams (1. as under d)).

- f) **For value letters:** To the interior, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Germany, the territories of Russia-Poland, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania occupied by the Austro-Hungarian troops, and finally for letters of credit to the German General Government of Warsaw and the territory of the German Eastern Command, regardless of the weight and value, 10 *fillér* each.

So, for example, for a letter of credit to Austria, weighing 20 grams, with a declaration of value of 240 K, there is: a weight fee of 15 *fillér*, a value fee of 10 *fillér*, a registration fee of 25 *fillér*, plus a war surcharge of 10 *fillér*, a total of 60 *fillér*.

As a result, the condition that the weight and value fee collected for the letter of credit cannot be less than 60 *fillér* together, is automatically eliminated.

Furthermore, *e.g.* for a 278 gram, 8000 K insured letter with a declaration of value, the following applies: weight charge 80 *fillér*, value charge 2 K 70 *fillér*, registered mail charge 25 *fillér*, plus 10 *fillér* war surcharge, total 3 K 85 *fillér*.

- g) **For parcels:** For parcels destined for Hungary, for the countries and territories listed under f), and finally for the field post offices, regardless of weight and value, 20 *fillér*.

So, for example, for a domestic parcel weighing 4 kg 800 grams, with a declaration of value of 38 K, the following applies: weight charge 70 *fillér*, value charge 10 *fillér*, plus 20 *fillér* war surcharge, total 1 K; for a parcel weighing 6 kg 500 grams to Austria, the following applies: weight charge of 2 K, plus a 20 *fillér* war surcharge, total of 2 K 20 *fillér*.

- h) **For postal money orders:** To the interior, Austria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the territories of Russian-Poland, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania occupied by the Hungarian-Austrian troops and to the camp post offices, 5 *fillér* per piece, regardless of the amount.

So, for example, for a domestic order of 9 K, the following applies: fee of 15 *fillér*, plus a 5 *fillér* war surcharge, total of 20 *fillér*; for an order of 870 K, the following applies: fee of 1 K 5 *fillér*, plus a 5 *fillér* war surcharge, total of 1 K 10 *fillér*.

There is also a war surcharge of 5 *fillér* for postal money collection orders (*megbizásilap*) and cash-on-delivery orders, which is to be deducted from the amount to be paid.

- i) **For the payment of cheque payment orders**, individually, regardless of the amount, 10 *fillér*. (This does not apply to non-officer personnel in the field, nor to official bodies.)

I would like to emphasize that there are no war surcharges for postal items sent abroad, except for the countries and territories mentioned above.

- j) **For telegrams**, anywhere, individually, 20 *fillér*. For telegram orders, the war surcharges under h) and j) are applied separately.

- k) **For telegram transmission**, 20 *fillér*, including the previous 10 *fillér* fee, 30 *fillér*.

- l) **For long-distance telephone calls** to any destination: per service and per invitation: 10 *fillér* in the 1st rate zone, 20 *fillér* in the other rate zones.

No war surcharge shall be charged for standard long-distance calls. For moderate-rate long-distance calls, half of the war surcharge shall be charged.

2. War surcharges shall be an additional part of the regular postage, money order, presentation, delivery, notification, *etc.* charges and shall be deducted together with the other charges, at the same time, in the same amount and in the same manner, and shall be charged for credited telegrams and credited long-distance calls and shall be collected subsequently.

The 10 *fillér* war surcharge for the payment of cheque payment orders shall be collected at the time of payment, or shall be deducted from the amount to be paid and shall be affixed to the payment order in postage stamps, which postage stamps shall then be invalidated by the imprint of the place and date stamp.

3. No war surcharge shall be payable for exempted items, telegrams and telephone calls.
4. For domestic mail items sent after June 14 of the current year, which are not postage-paid or are insufficiently postage-paid, or for domestic mail items sent after the specified deadline, which are otherwise correctly postage-paid, but for which the war surcharge has not been deducted, the same rules apply to the amount of the war surcharge to be charged and how it is collected from the addressee as apply to other postal charges (*e.g.* for an unpaid letter, double the war surcharge must be collected from the addressee).

However, exceptionally, until and including June 30 of the current year, in such cases the war surcharge shall be collected in a single amount on postage.

5. For correspondence subject to postage from authorities, offices and entities that are absolutely exempt from postage to addressees subject to postage, the war surcharges established above, as well as the regular charges, shall always be collected from the addressees in a single amount.
6. Post offices shall carefully study the above, shall take great care to correctly deduct and collect the war surcharges, and shall readily provide the public with the desired information in all directions.

7. Post offices should affix the 2 *fillér* war surcharge to the 8 *fillér* postcards and (to both halves of the) 16 *fillér* reply postcards issued by the post office before delivery and sell the postcards for 10 and 20 *fillér*, respectively. When a new set is issued, these postcards will be stamped with a 10 *fillér* postage stamp imprint.
8. Finally, I call on post offices to display the attached announcement in a conspicuous manner in a place intended for the public.

PTRT 86, 13.09.1918: Change in the rate of postal items arriving in Hungary from Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, from the territory occupied by the Hungarian-Slovakian troops, from Germany, from the General Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, from the territory of the German Eastern Command.

1. The following wartime surcharges shall be levied on all mail items from Austria and Bosnia-Herzegovina to Hungary, starting from **1 September** of the current year, regardless of weight or value:

- a) for letters, 5 *f* per piece;
- b) for postcards issued by the post office, 2 *f* (no surcharge shall be levied on postcards produced by private industry);
- c) for printed matter up to 50 g, 2 *f*; over this weight, 5 *f* per 50 g,
- d) for letters of value, 5 *fillér* per piece (the minimum total fee for a letter of value remains 60 *f*);
- e) for postal money orders, 5 *f* per piece;
- f) for parcels, 20 *f* per piece.

2. From **September 15**, 1918, the following war surcharges shall be levied on all mail from field post offices and from the territories occupied by the Hungarian-Austrian troops in Russia-Poland, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania and Italy:

- a) for letters, 5 *f*;
- b) for postcards issued by the post office, 2 *f* (no war surcharge shall be levied on postcards produced by private industry);
- c) for printed matter up to 50 g, 2 *f*; over this weight, 5 *f*;
- d) for value letters, 10 *f*;
- e) for postal money orders, 5 *f* per piece;
- f) for parcels, 20 *f*.

3. The following war surcharges shall be levied on items arriving in Hungary from Germany, the territory of the German General Government in Warsaw and the territory of the German Eastern Command, starting from **1 October** 1918:

- a) for letters, 5 *pf*;
- b) for postcards, 5 *pf*;
- c) for printed matter up to 50 g, 2 *pf*; 50 - 100 g, 2½ *pf*; over 100 g, 5 *pf*;
- d) for samples of goods over 100 g, 5 *pf*;
- e) for business papers, 5 *pf*;
- f) for combined items, 5 *pf*;
- g) for parcels up to 5 kg, 25 *pf*; over 5 kg, 50 *pf*;
- h) for value letters, 10 *pf*;
- i) for postal money collection orders, 5 *pf*;
- j) for postal money orders up to 100 *mark*, 5 *pf*. Over 100 *mark*, 10 *pf*.

I call on the offices that if I have deducted the war surcharge on items coming from the aforementioned areas and destined for Hungary, it or the missing part should be collected and accounted for in double the amount for ordinary letter mail items, and in single amount for registered items, on postage from the addressee. I also warn the exchange post offices separately that these war surcharges will be ignored in international settlements.

PTRT 96, 15.10.1918: Warning regarding printed matter originating from Germany exempt from war surcharge.

According to points 3 c) and g) of Decree No. 78.838 published in **PTRT 86, 13.09.1918**, printed matter and parcels originating from Germany are subject to a war surcharge and, if it has not been deducted from the parcel, the destination post office is obliged to collect it from the addressee.

I warn the offices that printed matter and parcels sent from Germany by newspaper publishing companies to Hungary to newspaper companies or private individuals with newspaper and magazine content, as well as printed

matter in which intelligence agencies send political, commercial or other news of public interest to newspapers and magazines, are exempt from the war surcharge. Therefore, the offices should not object to the lack of war surcharges for these items, if they are otherwise properly postage-free.

There was no clear end to the imposition of this War Surcharge on ordinary postal charges. In the chaos and inflation of the immediate aftermath of the war in late 1918 and 1919, it appears that the postal war surcharge element was subsumed into general postage rate rises (this was the case in early agreements with the newly formed SHS: **PTRT 10, 30.01.1919**, viz. 13. *'War surcharges due on items shall remain the undivided property of the receiving postal administration.'*). The tax on telephone calls was removed on 12.12.1918. The war surcharge on cheque payments from the Hungarian Savings Bank was converted into an equivalent 'brokerage' fee from 15.02.1919 (**PTRT 13, 07.02.1919**). The minimum charge for a value letter was doubled on 14.06.1919, incorporating the original surcharge element (**PTRT 45, 14.06.1919**). The surcharge element on telegrams to Germany was lifted on 16.08.1919 at the same time as some large but temporary price rises (**PTRT 53, 15.08.1919**). From 01.10.1919 the charges for domestic telegrams and for those to Austria increased, and at the same time the 20 f war surcharge was removed (**PTRT 57, 29.09.1919**). From 01.11.1919, the war tax element was removed from telegram charges to other foreign countries (**PTRT 61, 23.10.1919**). No further officially listed changes have been identified.