

INVENTORYFLOW

Courier Rate Comparison Table

MENA Edition

7 carriers across UAE & Saudi Arabia — plus cross-border rates

Domestic ecommerce parcel rates • COD fees • Cross-border surcharges • Decision helper
Last verified: March 2026 • inventoryflow.co

■ United Arab Emirates (AED)

Market context: The UAE ecommerce delivery market is dominated by Aramex, Emirates Post (via EMX), and a growing wave of tech-first last-mile players (iMile, Quiqup). COD is declining, now approximately 25-30% of transactions, with card and digital wallet payments now dominant. All rates below include 5% VAT unless noted.

CARRIER	0 – 0.5 KG	0.5 – 1 KG	1 – 3 KG	3 – 5 KG	5 KG+	COD FEE	PICKUP FEE	RETURN FEE	SAME-DAY
Aramex	AED 15	AED 18	AED 22 – 30	AED 32 – 42	~AED 8/kg	3% (min AED 3)	Free (account)	AED 15	AED 30+ (same emirate)
Emirates Post (Standard)	AED 2	AED 5	AED 8 – 14	AED 16 – 22	~AED 4/kg	N/A	Drop-off (post offices)	AED 5	N/A
Emirates Post (Express / EMX)	AED 20	AED 25	AED 30 – 40	AED 42 – 55	~AED 10/kg	N/A	Free (EMX pickup)	AED 20	AED 30 (next business day)
iMile	AED 10	AED 13	AED 16 – 22	AED 25 – 35	~AED 6/kg	3% (min AED 2)	Free	AED 10	AED 22+ (Dubai)
Max Express	AED 14	AED 18	AED 22 – 30	AED 32 – 45	~AED 8/kg	Contact carrier	Free (account)	AED 14	AED 25 (Bullet: hours)
J&T Express (UAE)	AED 12	AED 15	AED 18 – 26	AED 28 – 38	~AED 7/kg	3%	Free (scheduled)	AED 12	N/A
DHL Express	AED 35	AED 45	AED 65 – 100	AED 110 – 150	~AED 25/kg	N/A	Free (account)	Contact DHL	AED 50+

Emirates Post pricing note: Standard mail rates (AED 2-5) are the cheapest but only available via post office drop-off with 3+ working day delivery. For ecommerce, the Express/EMX service (next-day) is more relevant at AED 20-30 per parcel. **Premium service** (same-day) costs ~AED 150 for time-critical deliveries.

Quick Notes

Aramex — Largest MENA network, strong brand, COD support, same-day in major emirates. Higher rates than newer players, longer delivery windows reported.

Max Express — "Bullet" service delivers within hours, strong in Abu Dhabi. Smaller network, limited API integration.

Emirates Post — Cheapest standard rates, government-backed, universal coverage. No COD for standard mail, slower delivery, limited ecommerce features.

iMile — Competitive pricing, fast growth, good for marketplace sellers. Newer brand, still building trust.

J&T Express — SEA expertise brought to MENA, expanding rapidly since 2022. Still building UAE coverage, no same-day yet.

DHL Express — Premium reliability, ideal for high-value goods, global tracking. 2-3x more expensive than local carriers.

All rates include 5% VAT. Rates are for within-UAE delivery (all emirates). Remote areas (Al Ain outskirts, Fujairah interior) may incur AED 5-10 surcharge. Verified via carrier websites and UAE ecommerce comparison sources, March 2026.

■ Saudi Arabia (SAR)

Market context: Saudi Arabia's ecommerce logistics sector is booming under Vision 2030. COD dominance is even higher here than in the UAE — approximately 60-70% of ecommerce transactions are COD. SMSA Express and Naqel are the domestic market leaders, with Aramex as the main international player.

CARRIER	0 – 0.5 KG	0.5 – 1 KG	1 – 3 KG	3 – 5 KG	5 KG+	COD FEE	PICKUP FEE	RETURN FEE	SAME-DAY
SMSA Express	SAR 18	SAR 20	SAR 25 – 35	SAR 38 – 50	~SAR 9/kg	3 – 5% (negotiable)	Free (account)	SAR 18	SAR 35+ (Riyadh/Jeddah)
Naqel Express	SAR 20	SAR 22	SAR 28 – 38	SAR 42 – 55	~SAR 10/kg	3 – 5%	Free (account)	SAR 20	SAR 40+ (major cities)
Aramex	SAR 18	SAR 22	SAR 28 – 38	SAR 40 – 52	~SAR 9/kg	3% (min SAR 3)	Free (account)	SAR 18	SAR 35+ (Riyadh/Jeddah)
Saudi Post (SPL)	SAR 15	SAR 18	SAR 22 – 32	SAR 35 – 48	~SAR 8/kg	N/A	Drop-off (post offices)	SAR 15	N/A
Saudi Post (Express Plus)	Flat rate: SAR 141 for parcels up to 30 kg — premium next-day service nationwide					N/A	Included	Included	Next-day
J&T Express (KSA)	SAR 15	SAR 18	SAR 22 – 30	SAR 33 – 45	~SAR 8/kg	3%	Free (scheduled)	SAR 15	N/A
DHL Express	SAR 45	SAR 55	SAR 80 – 120	SAR 130 – 180	~SAR 30/kg	N/A	Free (account)	Contact DHL	SAR 60+

Saudi Post Express Plus: Flat SAR 141 for up to 30 kg makes it the best value for heavy parcels. For standard ecommerce (1-3 kg), SMSA and J&T Express offer the most competitive rates. **COD is critical** — 8 out of 10 major carriers in Saudi Arabia support COD.

Quick Notes

SMSA Express — Market leader, next-day to all Saudi cities by 6 PM, noon delivery to key cities. Slightly premium pricing, COD rates negotiable only at volume.

Saudi Post — Cheapest standard rates, Express Plus is great for heavy items. No COD, slower delivery (4-8 days standard), limited tracking.

Naqel Express — Reliable B2B and B2C, next-day delivery, strong Riyadh presence. Higher rates than SMSA for light parcels.	J&T Express — Competitive pricing, expanding KSA network, COD support. New entrant, coverage gaps in rural areas.
Aramex — Best cross-border (UAE-KSA), strong brand, COD support. Slower domestic than SMSA/Naqel.	iMile — Competitive rates, tech-driven, expanding into KSA. Newer entrant, still building KSA coverage.

All rates include 15% VAT. Rates for major city routes (Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, Makkah, Madinah). Remote regions may incur SAR 5-15 surcharge. Delivery within Kingdom: 1-5 days depending on carrier and distance. Verified March 2026.

■ Cross-Border: UAE ↔ Saudi Arabia

Why this matters: Many ecommerce sellers in the GCC serve both UAE and Saudi Arabia from a single warehouse. Cross-border shipping between these two countries is the most common MENA trade lane for ecommerce. Customs clearance, VAT implications, and delivery times all factor into courier selection.

CARRIER	0 – 0.5 KG	0.5 – 1 KG	1 – 3 KG	3 – 5 KG	5 KG+	DELIVERY TIME	COD (CROSS-BORDER)	CUSTOMS HANDLING
Aramex	AED 45 / SAR 45	AED 55 / SAR 55	AED 70 – 100	AED 110 – 150	~AED 25/kg	2 – 4 days	Yes (2-week remittance)	Included
SMSA Express	SAR 40	SAR 50	SAR 65 – 90	SAR 100 – 140	~SAR 22/kg	2 – 3 days	Yes (negotiable)	Included
Naqel Express	SAR 42	SAR 52	SAR 68 – 95	SAR 105 – 145	~SAR 24/kg	2 – 4 days	Yes	Included
DHL Express	AED 65 / SAR 65	AED 80 / SAR 80	AED 120 – 180	AED 200 – 280	~AED 45/kg	1 – 2 days	No	Included (DDP option)
FedEx	AED 70 / SAR 70	AED 85 / SAR 85	AED 130 – 195	AED 220 – 300	~AED 50/kg	1 – 2 days	No	Included
Emirates Post (EMS)	AED 35	AED 45	AED 60 – 85	AED 95 – 130	~AED 20/kg	3 – 7 days	No	Basic
J&T Express	AED 40 / SAR 40	AED 50 / SAR 50	AED 65 – 90	AED 100 – 135	~AED 22/kg	3 – 5 days	Yes	Included

Cross-border COD: Only Aramex, SMSA, Naqel, and J&T offer cross-border COD between UAE and Saudi Arabia. Remittance cycles for cross-border COD are typically 2 weeks (vs. 1 week domestic). **Customs:** GCC customs union means no duties for most consumer goods, but VAT applies at destination (5% UAE / 15% KSA).

Cross-Border Tips for Ecommerce Sellers

1. Warehouse Location Matters

3. COD Collection Delays

If >60% of your orders go to Saudi Arabia, warehouse in KSA (Riyadh or Jeddah). If split evenly, Dubai is the better hub due to logistics infrastructure and free zone options.

2. VAT Implications

UAE VAT is 5%, Saudi VAT is 15%. Selling from UAE to KSA means your customer pays 15% KSA VAT at import. Factor this into pricing.

Cross-border COD remittance takes ~2 weeks. For cash flow management, consider offering prepaid incentives (5-10% discount) to reduce COD share.

4. Arabic Labeling

Saudi customs may require Arabic product descriptions on shipping labels. Aramex and SMSA handle this automatically. Verify with other carriers.

Cross-border rates are approximate and depend on carrier contract, volume, and specific origin/destination cities. Customs handling is included in all listed carriers but processing times vary. Verified March 2026.

■ Carrier Comparison — At a Glance

CARRIER	COUNTRIES	BEST FOR	COD	SAME-DAY	CROSS-BORDER	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Aramex	UAE, KSA, GCC+	CROSS-BORDER HIGH VOLUME	Yes (both)	Yes (UAE)	Best	Largest MENA network, cross-border COD, 65+ countries	Higher domestic rates, longer delivery times reported
SMSA Express	KSA (primary), UAE	HIGH VOLUME SAUDI FOCUS	Yes	Yes (KSA)	Good	KSA market leader, next-day by 6 PM, noon delivery option	Stronger in KSA than UAE, premium pricing
Naqel Express	KSA (primary)	B2B SAUDI FOCUS	Yes	Yes (major cities)	Good	Strong B2B logistics, reliable KSA domestic	Pricier than SMSA, limited UAE presence
Emirates Post / EMX	UAE	LOW VOLUME BUDGET	No	Yes (Premium)	Basic (EMS)	Cheapest standard rates, universal UAE coverage	No COD, slow standard delivery, limited ecommerce tools
Saudi Post (SPL)	KSA	BUDGET HEAVY PARCELS	No	No	Basic	Cheapest standard, Express Plus (SAR 141 / 30 kg)	No COD, slow (4-8 days), limited tracking
iMile	UAE (primary)	LOW VOLUME MARKETPLACE	Yes	Yes (Dubai)	Limited	Competitive pricing, fast growth, COD support	Newer brand, limited KSA coverage
J&T Express (MENA)	UAE, KSA	MULTI-COUNTRY GROWING	Yes (both)	No	Yes	Competitive pricing, SEA ecommerce expertise, expanding	New MENA entrant, still building coverage
Max Express	UAE	SAME-DAY ABU DHABI	Contact	Yes (Bullet)	No	"Bullet" delivery in hours, strong Abu Dhabi presence	Small network, limited API
DHL Express	UAE, KSA, Global	FRAGILE HIGH-VALUE	No	Yes	Best (global)	Premium reliability, DDP options, global reach	2-3x local pricing

Coverage and features verified March 2026. COD availability and rates may vary by merchant agreement, volume tier, and contract terms.

■ Decision Helper — 4 Scenarios

Not sure which carrier to start with? Find the scenario closest to your business below.

SCENARIO 1

New UAE-based seller, 5-20 orders/day, UAE only

Situation: You are starting your ecommerce business in the UAE. You need COD support (common for a portion of your orders). Budget matters. You ship within UAE only.

Start with: iMile (cheapest with COD) or J&T Express (expanding fast)

Why: iMile offers the lowest rates with COD support and free pickup. J&T brings SEA ecommerce expertise to MENA with competitive pricing. Use Aramex as backup for when same-day is needed.

SCENARIO 2

Saudi-based seller, 20-100 orders/day, KSA domestic

Situation: You sell primarily within Saudi Arabia. COD is 60-70% of orders. You need reliable next-day delivery to Riyadh, Jeddah, and Dammam.

Start with: SMSA Express (market leader) + J&T Express (cost backup)

Why: SMSA delivers next-day to all Saudi cities by 6 PM with noon delivery to key cities. J&T offers competitive rates as a secondary carrier. Negotiate volume discounts at 50+ daily orders.

SCENARIO 3

Cross-border seller, shipping UAE to Saudi Arabia (or both)

Situation: You warehouse in Dubai but sell to both UAE and Saudi customers. You need one carrier that handles both domestic and cross-border with COD.

Start with: Aramex (best cross-border network + COD)

Why: Aramex has the strongest UAE-KSA corridor with included customs handling and cross-border COD. Use SMSA or J&T as a domestic-only partner in Saudi Arabia for cost optimization on KSA-to-KSA orders.

SCENARIO 4

High-value or time-critical goods

Situation: You sell electronics, luxury goods, or perishables. Same-day delivery matters. Insurance and premium handling are required.

Start with: Max Express (Abu Dhabi same-day) / DHL Express (high-value) / SMSA (KSA premium)

Why: Max Express "Bullet" delivers within hours in UAE. DHL provides the best handling and insurance for high-value goods. SMSA noon delivery is the fastest option within Saudi Arabia.

Pro tip — COD cash flow management. In MENA, COD is king. But COD creates cash flow gaps: domestic remittance is weekly, cross-border is biweekly. At 100 orders/day with an average order value of AED 200 and 30% COD, that is AED 6,000/day locked in carrier remittance. Negotiate daily or biweekly remittance at volume. Offer 5-10% prepaid discount to shift customers toward card payment.

Volume Discount Thresholds (MENA Typical)

DAILY VOLUME	EXPECTED DISCOUNT	NEGOTIATION LEVERAGE
1 – 20 orders	Published rates (no discount)	Use shipping aggregators (OTO, Shiprocket) for 10-15% savings
20 – 50 orders	5 – 10% off published rates	Request corporate/postpaid account
50 – 200 orders	15 – 25% off published rates	Dedicated account manager, negotiate COD remittance frequency
200+ orders	25 – 40% off published rates	Custom contract, daily COD remittance, SLA penalties

■ MENA vs SEA — Key Differences

If you sell in both regions, here are the critical differences that affect your logistics strategy.

FACTOR	MENA (UAE + SAUDI ARABIA)	SOUTHEAST ASIA (6 COUNTRIES)
COD Share	25-30% in UAE (declining), 60-70% in Saudi Arabia	31-42% (varies by country, highest in PH)
Average Shipping Cost	AED 12-25 / SAR 15-30 per parcel (1 kg)	\$1-3 USD per parcel (1 kg), much cheaper
Delivery Speed	Next-day standard in UAE/KSA cities	2-5 days standard (varies by country/region)
VAT	UAE: 5% KSA: 15%	Varies: 0% (most) to 12% (PH)
Courier Fragmentation	Low: 3-4 major players per country	High: 5-10+ carriers per country
Cross-Border Complexity	Low (GCC customs union, no duties)	Medium (ASEAN trade agreements vary)
Language	Arabic + English (bilingual labeling often required)	Local language per country (6 different languages)
Key Carrier for Multi-Country	Aramex (UAE + KSA + GCC)	Ninja Van or J&T Express (6-country network)
Address Quality	Improving but inconsistent (no standardized postcodes in UAE until recent reforms)	Variable (SG excellent, ID/PH challenging in rural areas)
Return Rates	Higher (15-25%, partly due to COD refusals)	Lower (8-15%, marketplace return policies)

Selling in both regions? Use Aramex for MENA and Ninja Van/J&T for SEA. Both offer API integrations that can connect to a single OMS. The biggest operational difference is COD management: MENA requires more aggressive prepaid incentives and faster remittance negotiation to maintain healthy cash flow.

■ Sources & Methodology

How We Compiled This Data

Rates were collected in March 2026 from official carrier websites, rate calculators, shipping aggregators, and verified industry comparison articles. Where exact published rate cards were not publicly available (common in MENA where rates are often quote-based), we used carrier rate calculators with standardized test shipments and cross-referenced with aggregator platforms and industry sources.

Important disclaimer: Shipping rates in the MENA region are often negotiated per merchant and not publicly published. The rates in this document are indicative based on published rate calculators, aggregator data, and industry sources as of March 2026. Your actual rates will depend on your volume, contract terms, and specific routes. Always request a formal quote from each carrier before making commitments.

Official Carrier Websites

Aramex: aramex.com/ae | aramex.com/sa

SMSA Express: smsaexpress.com

Naqel Express: naqelexpress.com

Emirates Post / EMX: emiratespost.ae | emx.ae

Saudi Post (SPL): splonline.com.sa

J&T Express MENA: jtexpress.me

Max Express: maxexuae.com

iMile: imile.com

DHL Express: dhl.com (UAE/KSA)

Industry & Comparison Sources

ClickPost (clickpost.ai) — Top courier companies in Dubai/UAE and Saudi Arabia

Quiqup (quiqup.com) — Top delivery companies in UAE, best logistics companies

Huddex (huddex.com) — Best international courier service in UAE 2026

GrowSera (growsera.com) — Best shipping companies in Saudi Arabia 2025

Bateel Tech (bateeltech.sa) — Best shipping companies for Saudi online stores

NamaalT (namaait.com) — Well-known shipping companies in Saudi Arabia

TryOTO (tryoto.com) — Multi-carrier shipping rates calculator for MENA

Market Data

Logistics Middle East — MENA ecommerce logistics coverage and carrier expansion reports

Mordor Intelligence — MENA courier, express, and parcel market analysis

Khaleej Times — Emirates Post rate announcements

Saudi Gazette / Arab News — Saudi Post and SMSA service updates

Rate Verification Method

For each carrier, we ran test shipments through official rate calculators using:

TEST PARAMETER	UAE	SAUDI ARABIA
Origin	Dubai, Dubai	Riyadh
Destination	Abu Dhabi	Jeddah
Weight tested	0.5 kg, 1 kg, 3 kg, 5 kg	0.5 kg, 1 kg, 3 kg, 5 kg
Package type	Standard box (30×20×15 cm)	Standard box (30×20×15 cm)

INVENTORYFLOW

Master Your Ecommerce Operations

inventoryflow.co • Free guides, tools, and comparison tables for ecommerce sellers in SEA & MENA