



Comprehensive Packaging Guidelines

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Proper packaging is essential for ensuring the safety of your products during transportation. It not only protects your goods from damage, but it also helps to make them easier to handle and transport.

The speed of delivery, reliability, and tracking ability of a less-than-truckload (LTL) carrier make it ideal for many shipments. However, freight damage can be a potential risk of shipping via LTL carriers.

In this eBook, we will provide you with a comprehensive guide to packaging your shipments effectively. From selecting the right materials to properly securing your items for shipping, we've got you covered. Read on to learn about how safe packaging practices can help you deliver an enhanced customer experience with low damage rates.



Introduction

Shipping via less-than-truckload (LTL) carriers is often a great strategy and can help a small business save more money while shipping. For many shipments, LTL carriers are the best option because of their speed and reliability. However, one of the biggest risks you will face when using an LTL carrier is freight damage.

When shipping with a less-than-truckload provider, you can expect your shipment to be handled and transferred several times. Each trip your shipment makes increases the risk of damage. To prevent this from happening, follow the best packaging and materials handling practices.

When it comes to packaging, there are two primary considerations: security and efficiency

- Your primary responsibility is to meet the minimum requirements mentioned in the National Motor Freight Classification (NMFC) as a shipper.
- Package and label your goods efficiently and maintain an accurate description of all shipper documents. You must make your shipments damage-free.

Here are a few critical tips on packing your items so that they do not get damaged during the transition.

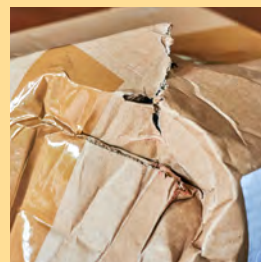
1. Make sure that the outside packaging is suitable for the item
2. Inner packaging needs to be secured and protected
3. And finally, you need to make sure that the package is properly sealed! An effectively packaged shipment offers well-contained goods that avoid surface damage and movement while in transit. They can withstand impact and are easily transportable.

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Threats faced by packages on the road

Freight is exposed to several threats once it is on the road. Below are a few examples of the dangers faced by packages on the road:

- Turbulence due to the moving vehicle
- Shock due to braking, going over speedbumps, etc.
- The pressure exerted on the items inside the package due to turning the vehicle stacking packages over one another.
- The packages are also exposed to environmental factors such as condensation, humidity, etc.



How to pack efficiently?

Loose items packaging materials

Bubble wrap

Bubble wrap is a light and flexible, low-density polyethylene packing material that is great for protecting fragile and irregularly shaped objects. This provides excellent surface protection and stress absorption. Bubble wrap can also be used to fill holes within shipping containers.

Cushioning products

Various materials such as sheet foam, plank foam, etc., are available to protect objects from vibrations and shocks. Many packaging vendors can provide foam cushioning that is tailored to the requirements of the product. Items like paper pads and foam-in-place are also handy to protect fragile objects.

Packaging material for corrosion protection

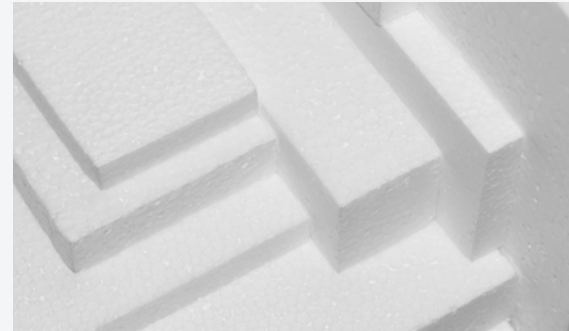
Non-treated metals might rust during storage and transportation. Traditional corrosion prevention materials, such as oil, grease, or paint, are time-consuming and not environmentally friendly. VCI (Vapor corrosion inhibitor) technology prevents untreated metal from rusting or oxidizing.

Void filling items

Items like loose-fill, crumpled paper pads, and packaging peanuts are used when there is a lot of room to fill and the items are uneven in shape. The small bits will fit the object(s) snugly and occupy all empty pockets of space.

Fiberboards

Layered corrugated fiberboards and honeycomb fiberboards are lightweight but paper-based solid structures that can be placed between stacked items to provide cushioning and cover protection. They are versatile and can be used as outer packaging materials as well.



How to pack loose items?

6 easy steps.

- 1** When choosing your shipping boxes, there are various things to consider. You should use corrugated boxes for heavy items, poly bags for lightweight, small items, and bubble mailers for very light items.
- 2** When you ship multiple loose products in the same box, ensure they are packed securely in a strong, sturdy box with plenty of cushioning material like bubble wrap around each piece so they are not damaged during transit. Do not forget to include extra padding between fragile items like glassware!
- 3** Do not let your precious package get damaged due to poor packing! Use EPE poly sheeting to prevent damage and make great neighbors with other fragile items inside the same box.
- 4** Add a buffer like a bubble wrap to protect the item from impact. This will also move the product away from the carton, reducing the number of effects transferred into the piece itself.
- 5** Give your customers and carriers a heads up about handling your products by labeling cartons, packaging materials, and product parts.
- 6** Seal the deal! Use pressure-sensitive plastic tape at least 2" wide and apply three strips of tape to the top and bottom sides of the carton, using the H taping method shown. Apply at least three strips of tape to the top and bottom sides of the carton. When you rub the entire tape surface, you ensure contact and adhesion.

Other important tips to consider

It is helpful to ensure that all packaging components are in line with the standards recommended by NMFC. Additionally, being mindful of a few other details can be critical to smooth and [hassle-free delivery](#).

- **Measuring the carton strength:** It is critical to choose cartons that provide the appropriate level of protection for the product. Insufficiently durable cartons may puncture from the inside as weight is applied or stretch and become damaged if excessive force is exerted. Cartons that are too rigid may become damaged if bent excessively or when the product is removed
- **Flute direction:** To prevent carton crushing and fatigue, you should direct your containers' flutes (the folds), so they run lengthwise. This will be in line with the "up" direction on the container.
- **V-boarding:** V-boards are recommended to reinforce the edges of cartons to ensure they are crushed or bent during shipping. The V-board thickness should be at least 3/16 inches. Securely tape v-boards every 4-5 inches, and parallel to the v-board, on all sides of the box. Straps, nails, staples, and glue should not be used to adhere the v-board to the carton.
- **To ensure safe transportation, double box the contents of your shipment.** Pack the original carton inside a larger outer carton at least 2" larger in all dimensions. Use appropriate shipping material to immobilize the original carton inside the larger outer carton; industrial bubble wrap or corrugated pads are often used.

What are shipping labels and why are they important?

A shipping label provides the information needed to transport your shipment according to the requirements of your organization. In some cases, these labels may indicate whether the contents are fragile or flammable, while in other instances, they may provide instructions on where the package should be sent. No matter what requirements are identified on each label, these directions must be followed as closely as possible.

A few examples of handling labels are mentioned:



Outer packaging materials



Fiberboard sheets and boxes

They are versatile products used as inner and outer packaging. Corrugated fiberboard boxes are used to ship products from the manufacturing plant to the retailer or the end-user. Items like Shaped Fiberboard have malleable properties that easily wrap around cylindrical objects.



Corner boards

Corner boards are made from various materials, including hardwoods and metals, designed to fit over the edges of columns for additional stability and to protect the exposed edges from damage.



Tier sheets

Tier sheets are used to transport and handle palletized material; they are thin sheets of heavy-duty paperboard, corrugated fiberboard, or plastic.



Stretch film

It is a transparent plastic sheeting that is primarily used to organize and secure items and reduce the risks of dust contamination.



Crates

Crates are designed and constructed from high-quality wood to ensure durability and protection during shipping.



Pallets

Pallets are platforms used for moving materials. They are usually made of wood, metal, or plastic and are lifted by forklifts, conveyor belts, and other types of machinery.

Packing your pallets?

10 important tips to consider

Pallets are one of the most used material for shipping and storing products. They are made from multiple wooden boards that are connected and are used to provide support for transporting, loading, and unloading items. If pallets are not taken care of properly, they can become damaged or broken, creating costly issues with lost or damaged goods.

Keep these tips in mind while packing your pallets:

- 1 Pallets should have entryways on four sides of the pallet to allow for efficient line hauling, loading, and unloading.
- 2 They are free of cracks, splinters, and are not missing any slats.
- 3 To prevent the pallet from deflecting, multiple bottom arms should be used to brace it.
- 4 Pallets in high-density storage systems should have a bottom support system of heavy-duty wire or plastic to disperse the weight of a load and prevent vertical pallet supports from breaking off.
- 5 The package should be protected by strapping or banding lined with v-board, wood, or plastic to avoid damage. It should be strapped in a two-way direction method
- 6 Materials for stretch wrapping/banding include polypropylene strapping, bi-axially oriented polypropylene film (BOPP), stretch wrap, and filament tape.
- 7 Pallet stacking should be built no taller than 72 inches or no heavier than 2500 pounds
- 8 To maximize the efficiency of your warehouse or distribution center, pallets should be palletized using a column, interlocking, or partial interlocking method.
- 9 The largest and the heaviest cartons must be placed at the bottom of the stacking.
- 10 The cartons need to be packed so that every corner is in contact with the deck board.



Avoid these while preparing your pallet

Broken or damaged goods can result from palletization errors such as pallet overhang, wide gaps between pallet boards (apertures), misalignments within a column stack, and incorrect weight and size distribution. Ensure to avoid the following:

Overhang, the amount of pallet space lying outside the edges of a loaded pallet, can reduce a package's compression strength. The overhang exposes packaged goods to tears, punctures, and impacts during normal handling and sorting.

- Incorrectly aligned cartons can negatively affect a box's maximum compression strength.
- Not storing corrugated or other paper-based packaging material in a dry environment. Humidity can reduce the packages' resistance to compression.
- Long-term storage can adversely affect the strength of corrugated and other paper-based products.
- Do not strap your packages loosely on the pallet. Ensure that the boxes are stacked snugly as well.
- Do not stack your cartons in a pyramid shape. Since pyramid-shaped pallet loads do not provide a level surface, top cartons are exposed to potential damage from other shipments.



Wrapping it up

Different wrapping techniques are used to secure a palletized shipment for over-the-road shipping. Palletized loads can be protected using x-wrapping, low and cross top wrapping, or a combination of both.

- The X-wrap technique prevents the shifting of goods. The pallet is tightened to avoid goods from falling off. It secures goods, attaching them to the pallet as a single piece so they will not move during shipping.
- Cross-top wrapping virtually stabilizes your product load in place during transport. It also provides security because product tampering can be easily detected.



Different Wrapping Techniques

The X-wrap technique

X-wrapping tightly binds the pallet, preventing the load from shifting and ensuring extra stability when the pallet is carrying a heavy load. X-wrapping makes the freight and the pallet one unit.

How to X-wrap:

Step 1: To keep the wrapping/stretch film from slipping on a pallet, slip the roll between the load and the pallet on which it's resting.

Step 2: Pull the film diagonally up to the top right corner.

Step 3: Bring the film down to the top of the load and catch it on the diagonal corner of a pallet. Then bring it up on a diagonal to the next pallet corner.

Step 4: After you wrap the load on the pallet, take the film along the bottom of the pallet and skip a top corner to complete the X pattern. Repeat as needed.

Step 5: Take the corner of the film and pull it diagonally up to the next corner.

Step 6: To secure your freight during transit, complete the X pattern on all four sides of the pallet.

The Cross-top wrap technique

When you transport a load by truck, it's very important to wrap the top. This helps keep the top of the load together and helps provide additional stabilization during transit. It also provides additional security. Without cross-top wrapping, your freight could be easily tampered with.

How to cross-top wrap:

Step 1: Pull the stretch wrap diagonally across the top of the pallet.

Step 2: Pull the film diagonally up to the top right corner.

Step 3: Wrap the film over the top corner. Then dip it below the next.

Step 4: Roll the film over the next corner, then flip it and roll it over the next corner.

Step 5: Once you've finished working around the outside of the pallet, move toward the middle of the pallet to complete the top layer.

When you're done tying down your palletized load, wrap up the sides of your load to keep it secure.

Do not forget the paperwork

Bill Of Lading document is a requirement for all LTL Shipments.

A bill of lading (BoL) is a contractual agreement between a carrier and a shipper. It acknowledges the receipt of goods in an acceptable condition and undertaking a delivery to the destination stated on the document.

A standard freight bill of lading would typically include:

- Name and addresses of shipper and receiver
- Shipment date
- Quantity of goods
- Dimensions of goods (weight, height, width)
- Freight classification
- Value of goods
- Description of goods
- Freight Club requires the shipper to present The Freight Club bill of lading before accepting the shipment to ensure the correct goods are given and received.

Want to know more about BoLs? Learn all about them [here](#).



Conclusion

Packaging your freight carefully and accurately is an investment in your business. Customers who receive damaged shipments are more likely to make ask for a refund, which can lead to losses. When you invest time and money into making sure your freight is packaged properly, it reduces the likelihood of damage claims and increases customer satisfaction.



The Freight Club Advantage

Freight Club is a leading end-to-end shipping platform that helps retailers effortlessly manage everything from booking and tracking to complete claims management and secondary insurance protection with zero subscription fees.

As part of Cymax Group Technologies, a leading eCommerce technology, and services provider in the furniture industry since 2004, we offer retailers enterprise rates with no volume restrictions with up to 7 levels of LTL drop shipping services across the U.S.

Freight Club has one of the largest residential LTL networks with delivery options that range from curbside delivery to White glove “Light Assembly” and “Package Removal” offered at the most competitive rates.

Enjoy peace of mind with an extensive network of the most trusted hand-picked carriers. We pre-vet every carrier, ensuring only the best carriers can provide you with a quote. Ship with trusted carriers and enjoy low damage rates and high customer satisfaction.

No matter how complicated your claim is, our team of logistics experts is here to help you file your claim and get the decision quickly with a claims payout rate higher than the industry standards. Our team ensures that your needs are met, and your claim is handled as efficiently as possible.

Our team of logistics experts provide personalized support to our retailers, helping them optimize their shipping strategy, managing their claims process, and ensuring that they have a smooth shipping experience at Freight Club.

Our intuitive analytics dashboard gives retailers complete visibility of their shipping data, including carrier transit times, damages, and overages, helping them make fast, informed decisions based on real-time data and analytics at no additional cost.

Trusted by thousands of retailers since 2015, Freight Club has been proudly offsetting 100% of carbon emissions for every shipment at no cost to our customers, enabling them to ship sustainably.



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Freight Club is part of Cymax Group Technologies,
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