

PROTECTING YOUR FREIGHT

FREIGHT SHIPPING PACKING GUIDE

A comprehensive guide on how to properly package and prepare your freight for shipment.



Shipment security is an important aspect of the freight shipping process. You want your products to arrive safely without damages, and that's why packaging and protection plays a significant role in your freight's security. When shipping LTL and full truckload, the role of freight packaging becomes even more important. Since your load may be handled multiple times during the transit, it is more prone to damage.

In freight shipping, all items must be properly packed by the shipper before the pickup time. Some carriers will refuse to move your freight if it lacks decent protection or fails basic packing guidelines. In most cases, truckload and LTL carriers would prefer your freight palletized or packed.

What are the types of freight packaging?

Pallet



Pallets, or simply the wooden platforms, are the most common type of freight packaging. Shippers use them to attach and secure already packaged freight. This way, the carrier can load a full trailer and avoid moving or damaging any cargo on the truck. Pallets are preferred for most shipments, so if you are not planning to use one, it is better to discuss packaging requirements with the shipping company or carrier.

Crate



Crates are wooden boxes that are almost as popular in shipping as pallets. Crates are suitable for securing fragile items, furniture pieces, works of art, and for stacking any other smaller shipment units.

Bags



In the transportation industry, shippers mostly use bags for sending small parcels but can also use it in shipping as well. This type of packaging comes in many sizes and is primarily utilized for clothing, apparel, etc. If you are transporting goods in shipping bags, make sure to properly seal and tape them. Also, the carrier may require you to provide additional packaging so the items are easy to stack.

Barrels



A barrel is a shipping unit, not a package type, but because they are sealed and secured from spilling the content, you can ship barrels. There are barrels of different shapes and sizes. For additional protection, you can use polymer tape to better secure the barrels.

Boxes



Boxes are common among parcel shippers and are not always suitable for LTL or full truckload shipments. However, if you stack and secure your items well, these shipments are good to go. If you want to send boxes, make sure there is no loose space inside and wrap the packages accordingly. It is recommended to stack a large number of boxes onto a pallet or secure it in any other way that excludes free transition in the trailer and freight damage.

How to prepare your freight shipment

Carriers and companies usually encourage shippers to palletize their freight. In particular, palletizing is the most known and common way to secure freight. Pallets are not the only type of freight packaging, but are the most common and preferred, especially when shipping LTL.

If there is no other way to pack freight except for palletizing, shippers must put their cargo on pallets to make it loadable.

How to pack your freight shipment

STEP 1: CHOOSING THE PALLET

The first step you want to take in packing your supplies is choosing the right pallet for your needs. You want a pallet large and sturdy enough so that your supplies fit properly on the pallet. A pallet is normally used when you have multiple packages to ship at once. The standard size pallet is 48" x 40" and can normally hold about 4,600 lbs.

STEP 2: PACKING

You will want to consider the best way to stack your products or supplies on the pallet itself. Depending on what you are shipping, the best way to do this is by purchasing angular cartons that can be stacked in an interlocking/column method. If you are shipping with bags, you will want to stack them as best as you can with a cardboard protector on top and on the bottom.

STEP 3: SECURING

Before you send your shipment, you will want to secure the stacked cartons or bags to the pallet. You can do this by using strapping or stretch wrapping. This will prevent pieces from getting lost or separated from the load.

STEP 4: PAPERWORK AND LABELS

Before you ship your item, you need to provide a printed Bill of Lading (BOL) to the carrier. The document is obligatory to provide, as it contains all the necessary information on the shipment. The more visible and clear your labeling is, the better chance your package will have a smooth delivery. If you are shipping to Canada, more paperwork will be required.

What is the difference between package and pallet shipping?

A package is usually a cardboard box that smaller items are shipped in. This can range from clothing items to car tires. A package is simply a parcel in the form of a compact unit. However, for larger shipments, you will need more protection. A pallet is normally used when you have multiple packages to ship at once.



TIPS ON PALLETIZING FREIGHT

- It's better to put the heaviest items on the bottom, and the lightest ones on the top.
- Put layers of cardboard or thick paper between every second or third pack. This will help reduce pressure on the bottom package and will help ensure safety.
- If you use boxes, cartons or bags, make sure you have properly sealed them. Protect the corners and stack the boxes properly. Don't leave empty space between the cartons to avoid shifts on a pallet.
- Padding your packages is a must for secure transportation. Some carriers will not take loose boxes with no internal protection, so make sure to stuff cartons with soft material, especially when items are fragile.
- Label each pack with instructions for handling, like "fragile," "do not turn upside down," etc. This will help carriers to handle your freight carefully.
- Use strapping or taping to make packages hold together. Wrapping the packages and capturing the pallet is good to strengthen the protection.

With these measures, you will not only be sure your shipment is safe but also simplify transporting and handling for carriers, which can eliminate your shipping spends!