



TRADE LOGISTICS

YOUR KEY TO INTERNATIONAL TRADE

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EXPORT Packing Guidelines

Protection of cargo:

It is universally accepted that the seller is responsible for the protection of the cargo. This is particularly important with regards to insurance as most insurance claims that are rejected are for the reason of insufficient packaging. The insurance companies do not give any written standard for packing, however should damage be found to have been caused by insufficient packaging, then the claim will not be paid.

Protection and packing must therefore be designed so as to afford the goods the maximum security against impact, crushing, dropping, spillage, contamination, moisture and pilferage. The use of straw, hay or chaff must never be used since these materials harbor vermin, bacteria and other objectionable organisms. In some countries, the wood used in packing must be fumigated.

Packaging markings

The preparation of cargo for carriage is never complete until appropriate identification and other necessary markings have been applied to the exterior of the packages. This should be shown on all sides of each package. If the carrier offloads our cargo at the wrong destination and it is found that there was not sufficient markings on the packages, the carrier might escape liability for the mistake. Cautionary markings can be used to indicate fragile or dangerous cargo. [Cautionary markings](#) make use of internationally recognized symbols to communicate their meaning.

Inherent vice

Inherent vice is when the exporter failed to protect the cargo from something they loaded with the cargo that damaged its commercial value. A good example was an export of umbrellas and cement stands. Every shipment arrived with mould on the umbrellas. The insurance finding was that the cement stands retained water, the heat on the journey evaporated the water which cooled down and settled on the umbrellas

causing mould. The insurance did not pay out the claim due to the “inherent vice” clause. The exporter had to seal off the cement stands for future shipments.

The most common cause of deterioration to cargo is condensation. Wood used in crates always have a small quantity of water and when there is heat it may throw out moist into the air enclosed around it.

Types of cargo transportation:

Packing may take many forms such as bales, boxes, barrels or bundles.

Bulk Cargo

Bulk cargo is commodity cargo (such as grains or liquids) that is transported unpacked in large quantities, generally as sea freight. With bulk cargo it is the carrier's responsibility to protect the cargo in the voyage.

Break Bulk Cargo

Break-bulk is non containerized cargo packed in individual units. It is generally used for large items that cannot fit in a container. Non-containerised cargo is at higher risk of theft and damage. If the cargo is sufficiently packed to offer the needed protection then it would be the carriers fault for the damage, however insurance is often required by the carrier to cover these risks.

Containerised Cargo

This applies to all cargo that is packed in containers. Most cargo falls is transported this way. Items may be individually packed before packing into the container. One whole container may be used per exporter or a container may be shared by between exporters. Booking container space is typically handled by a freight agent. Packing of containers is generally done by the carrier and can be done on the exporters premises. Goods should be securely packed inside the container to prevent movement. Containerised cargo offers increased security and decreased handling costs.

The 20 ft, 40 ft and 45 ft containers are common in trade throughout the world, with the first two being the most common. The dimensions of these containers are provided in the table below:

Type of container	Length (internal)	Width (internal)	Height (internal)	Carrying capacity
6m/20ft GP container	5,90 m (19' 3") (2,34 m (7' 7")	2,38 m (7' 8")	21 640 kg (47 716 lbs) maximum weight
12m/40Ft GP Container	12,01 m (39' 3")	2,33 m (7' 7")	2,38 m (7' 8")	26 500 kg (58 433 lbs) maximum weight
12m/40Ft GP High-Cube Container	12,01 m (39' 3")	2,33 m (7' 7")	2,69 m (8' 8")	26 330 kg (58 058 lbs) maximum weight
14M/45Ft GP Container	13,58 m (44' 6")	2,35 m (7' 7")	2,69 m (8' 8")	28 390 kg (62 589 lbs) maximum weight

Packing Containerised Cargo

The following guidelines are given should the container be packed at the exporters premises.

Container Security Test

Containers can be tested by potential water leakages using the light test. Place one person inside the container and then close the doors securely. The person inside the container is going to look for any small light beam that may get into the container. If light can get in, then water can get in and the container should be replaced or fixed.

Container Packing Guidelines

- Pack the commodity tightly. Any gaps existing should be filled.
- Any packaging must be dry, and compatible with the cargo
- Where different commodities are to be packed into the same container, separate heavy from light, and hard from soft. Remember heavy items may need individual securing.

- The centre of gravity of the system should be at the centre of the container and as low as possible. An even distribution of mass over the container floor and the placing of the heavy items on the floor will achieve this.
- There must be NO SMOKING inside a container.
- No attempt should be made to handle the container with improvised equipment.
- Individual packages should be as full as possible to resist external pressures, or well secured within its package.
- Individual packages may lend themselves to unitization, and this should be done to fit the physical limitations of the container and handling equipment used.
- If a gap is unavoidable this should be left, if possible, along the centre line of the container for ease of filling.
- If various commodities are to be packed in the same container, compatibility must be considered.
- Bear in mind that the container must be unpacked, and your methods and rotation of packing may be unknown to the receiver.

To the transport company, terminal operator and the shipping lines, it is of vital importance that the containers are stuffed in such a manner that:

- It does not exceed the axle load of a cartage trailer as laid down by the local road authorities (i.e. the cargo must be distributed evenly in the container).
- It does not exceed the carrying capacity of a cartage trailer as laid down by the local road authorities.
- It does not exceed the carrying capacity of the container (CSC Plate Rating)

Sealing the Containers

Each container must be sealed at the consignor's premises when packing is completed. The container operator provides seals. For FCL (Full Container Load meaning the cargo fills the container) and LCL (Less-than-Container Load meaning the cargo is not enough to fill a standard container) containers, the packer must affix the

seal for the depot operator on completion of packing. The seal number must be recorded on all shipping documents.

NOTE: A broken seal or replaced seal reveals that the doors have been tampered with and that possible unauthorized entry has been made.



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