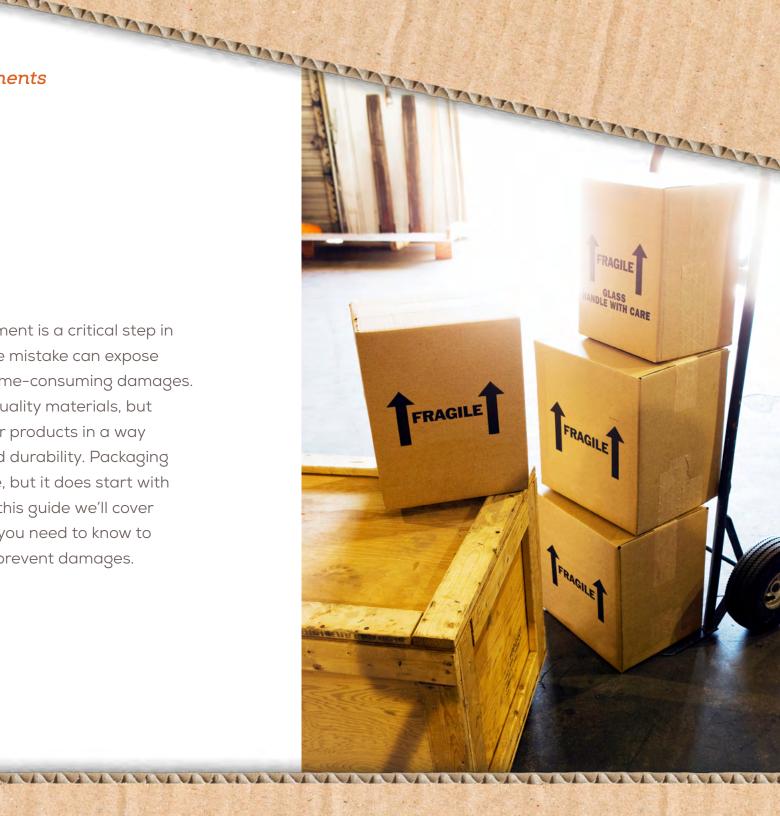
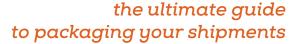
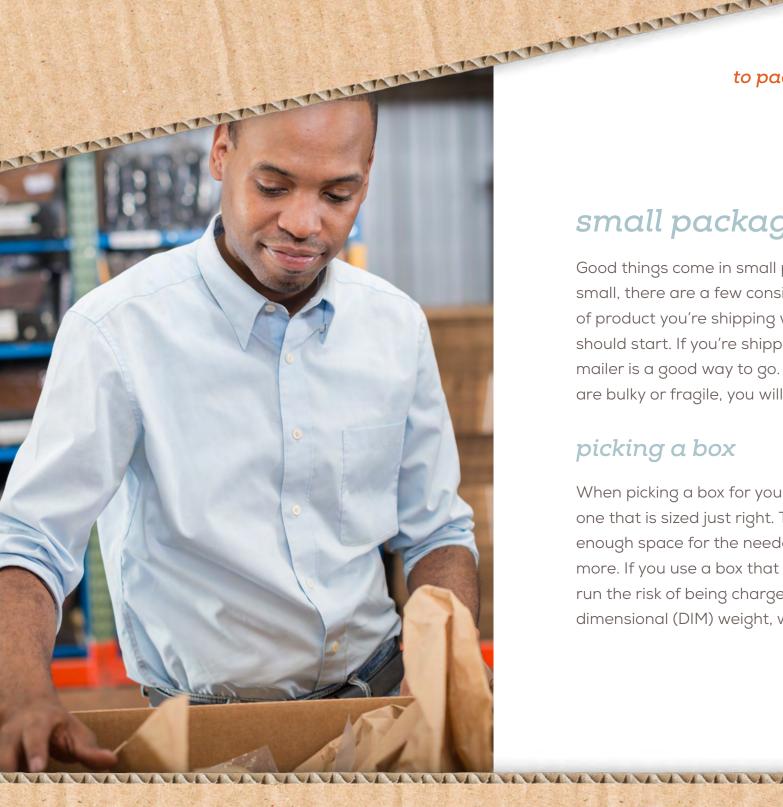


introduction

Properly packaging your shipment is a critical step in the shipping process. Just one mistake can expose your shipment to costly and time-consuming damages. Not only do you need to use quality materials, but you also need to package your products in a way that will increase strength and durability. Packaging is not a one-size-fits-all game, but it does start with some basic best practices. In this guide we'll cover the foundational information you need to know to avoid common mistakes and prevent damages.







small package shipments

Good things come in small packages. When shipping small, there are a few considerations to make. The type of product you're shipping will determine where you should start. If you're shipping soft items like t-shirts, a mailer is a good way to go. However, if your products are bulky or fragile, you will need a sturdy box.

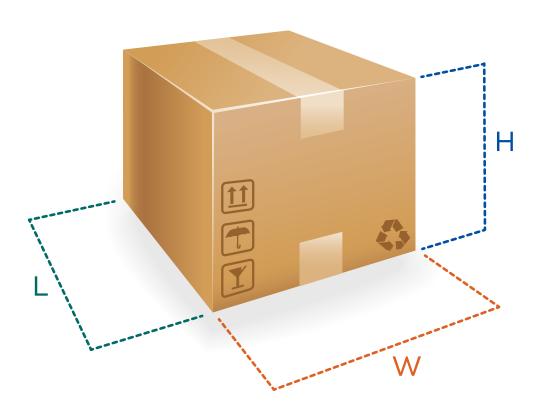
picking a box

When picking a box for your products, you want one that is sized just right. There should be just enough space for the needed cushioning and no more. If you use a box that is excessively large you run the risk of being charged according to your dimensional (DIM) weight, which can get quite pricy.

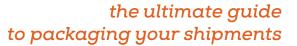
DIM weight pricing is a common industry practice that sets the transportation price based on package volume, in relation to its actual weight. Carriers use dimensional weight in order to account for the space packages take up on their trucks and planes. This allows for a more precise way to charge for their services.

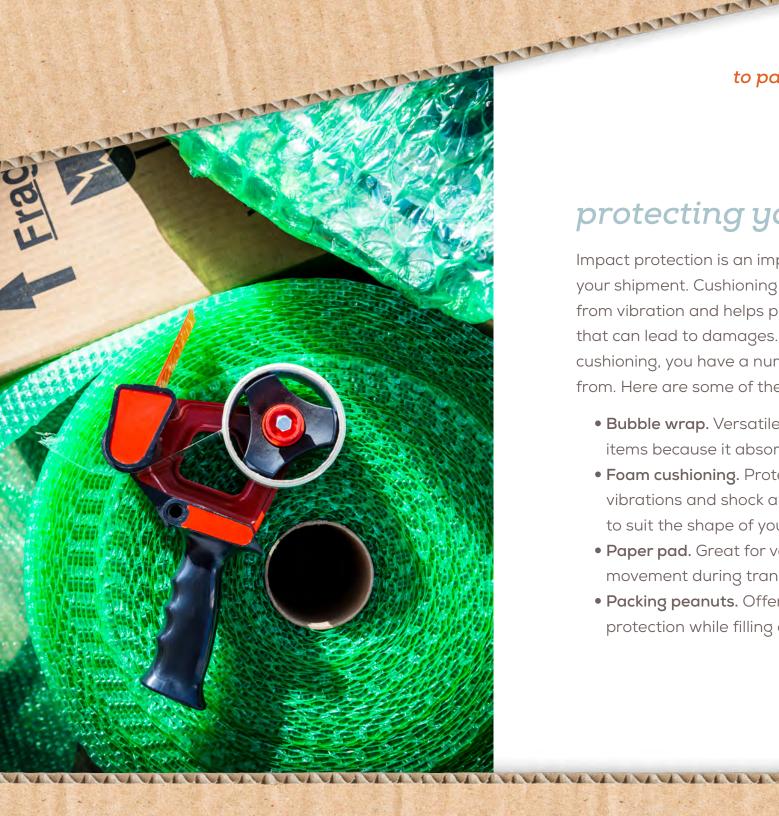
The basic formula for calculating DIM weight is (length x width x height)/DIM factor. For most small packages shipped through FedEx or UPS, the DIM factor is 139. Once you calculate your DIM weight, compare it to your actual weight. The greater of the two will become the billable rate.

Once you know what size box you need, not any old box will do. Start by picking a box that is in good condition. It's okay to use boxes that have already been on a few trips, but only if they're still in good shape. There shouldn't be any holes, rips, or dents.



Visit <u>PartnerShip.com/DIMcalculator</u> to quickly figure out your billable weight.





protecting your contents

Impact protection is an important part of packaging your shipment. Cushioning protects your contents from vibration and helps prevent movement that can lead to damages. When it comes to cushioning, you have a number of options to pick from. Here are some of the most common:

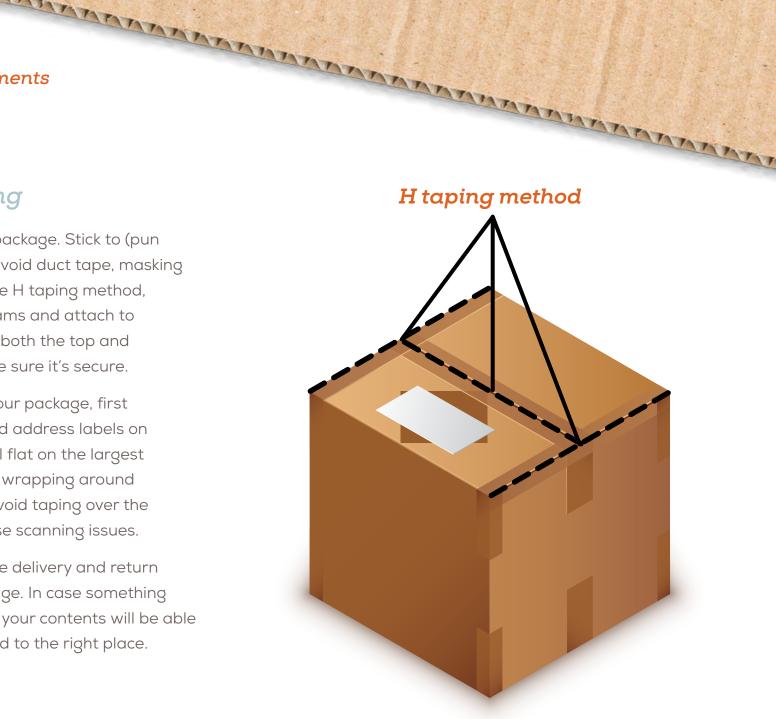
- Bubble wrap. Versatile and perfect for fragile items because it absorbs shock well.
- Foam cushioning. Protects against vibrations and shock and can be customized to suit the shape of your product.
- Paper pad. Great for void fill to prevent movement during transit.
- Packing peanuts. Offers shock protection while filling extra space.

sealing and labeling

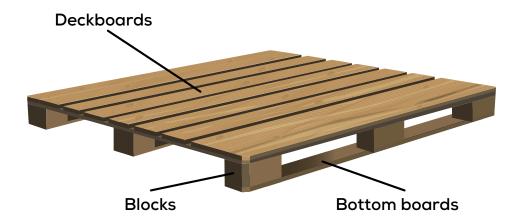
The next step is to seal your package. Stick to (pun intended) packing tape and avoid duct tape, masking tape, or scotch tape. Using the H taping method, tape across the flaps and seams and attach to the side of the box. Do this to both the top and the bottom of the box to make sure it's secure.

When you're ready to label your package, first make sure there aren't any old address labels on your box. Then place the label flat on the largest surface on the box and avoid wrapping around corners or covering seams. Avoid taping over the label, which can possibly cause scanning issues.

It's also good practice to place delivery and return information inside your package. In case something happens to the outside label, your contents will be able to be identified and get routed to the right place.



Block Pallet



Stringer Pallet



the to packaging to packaging freight shipments

Freight shipments are typically over 150 lbs. and can be palletized or non-palletized. When deciding how to package your freight, consider the size and weight of your shipment and how it will be handled. What kind of protection will it need? Will it be on a dedicated truck or will it be moved on multiple vehicles?

palletizing

Palletizing your freight will give it a solid base and will make movement on and off the truck easy and safe, making it a good choice for many different types of loads. Wooden pallets are the most commonly used and the two most prevalent types are stringer and block pallets. The stringer pallet gets its name from the three stringer boards that make up its base, while the block pallet is named for the blocks that its base is made of. Stringer pallets have 2-way forklift access but can be notched for 4-way access, while block pallets are designed with 4-way access.

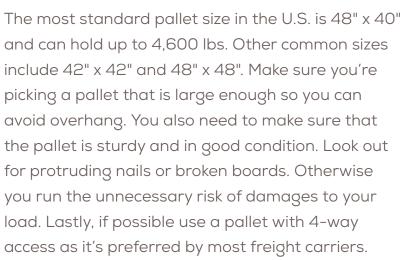
Even though wooden pallets are the most common, there are a few alternatives in the market. Metal, plastic, and corrugated pallets have been introduced for specialized needs.

- Metal pallets work best for closed-loop applications and have a longer lifespan than wooden pallets, but they typically weight more.
- Plastic pallets also have a longer lifespan and are weather-resistant. However, they can be slippery, making it hard to protect against movement.
- Corrugated pallets are lighter, so they work well for air freight shipments, but when exposed to moisture they can degrade.

Be cautious when considering alternative material pallets, as they are typically not as versatile as wooden pallets. For most freight shipments, wooden pallets will be your best bet for the protection you need and are the type most recommended by freight carriers.

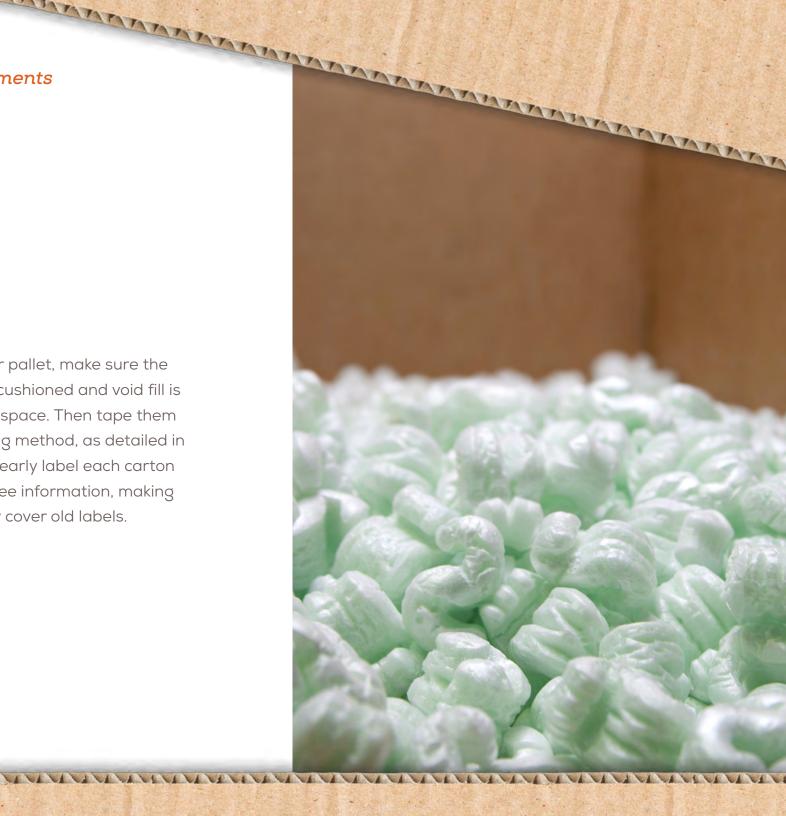






Cartons

For the cartons going on your pallet, make sure the contents inside are properly cushioned and void fill is used to eliminate any excess space. Then tape them up properly using the H taping method, as detailed in the small package section. Clearly label each carton with the shipper and consignee information, making sure to remove or completely cover old labels.





Don't: pyramid stack



Don't: misaligned stack



The way you stack your cartons is extremely important because it affects the strength of your shipment. There are several things to keep in mind when stacking:

- Use an aligned, column pattern
- Place heavier cartons on the bottom with lighter boxes at the top, and distribute weight evenly
- Use slip sheets between layers
- Don't let boxes hang over the edge of the pallet
- Make the top surface as flat as possible

When stacking, it's a good idea to use load protectors and edge boards to stabilize and strengthen the load. Load protectors are layers of corrugated fiberboard or heavy paperboard that can help distribute weight during stacking. Using load protectors on the top and bottom of your load can help reduce damage to those vulnerable areas and provide a level surface for your cartons. Edge boards help increase vertical stacking strength by stabilizing the load and preventing damage to corner edges. Make sure they are on all corners and run the full height and length of the stack to be effective.

Stretch-wrap and banding

Once you've stacked your cartons properly, you must secure them to the pallet with stretch-wrap and banding. If you're not using a machine for wrapping, tuck the lead of the wrap between the pallet and the bottom box and then wrap around in upward direction. Overlap each layer and twist the wrap every other rotation for increased durability. Once you get to the top, stretch the wrap diagonally over the corners and then go back down to the base. Wrap around the base but leave room so that it is accessible to the forklift. Make at least 5 full wraps around the entire shipment.

When banding your freight, use sturdy steel, rayon, polypropylene, nylon, or polyester straps. You'll want to keep the banding snug and close to the load to prevent breakage. It's also a good idea to band all sides of your freight for maximum protection.

Secure them through the forks of the pallet.











Labeling and other markings

Make sure each side of your shipment has the consignee information clearly visible. You may also need to add additional markings. Some common ones include "This End Up," "Do Not Stack," and "Handle With Care." These should be highly visible and easy to read.

You can also use crush cones or "no stack" cones to tell the carrier not to stack other items on your load. You can simply attach them to the top with tape. If the carrier disregards the warning, the consignee will immediately know because the cone will be flattened.

Other palletized freight

If you're not stacking cartons on your pallet, the way you protect your load may be slightly different.

Here are some common items you may be shipping and how to secure them to the pallet:

- Drums and pails. Pick a pallet with narrow gaps between the slats or one with a solid bottom, and make sure it's large enough to avoid overhang. Don't stack the pails taller than three high and then secure with stretch-wrap, edge protection, and banding.
- Bags. Stack the bags in an interlock pattern between solid top and bottom layers. Secure to the pallet tightly with stretch-wrap and banding.
- Spools. Since spools are vulnerable to rolling and shifting during transit, it's important to secure them tightly to the pallet. Anchor them safely by using blocking and bracing.







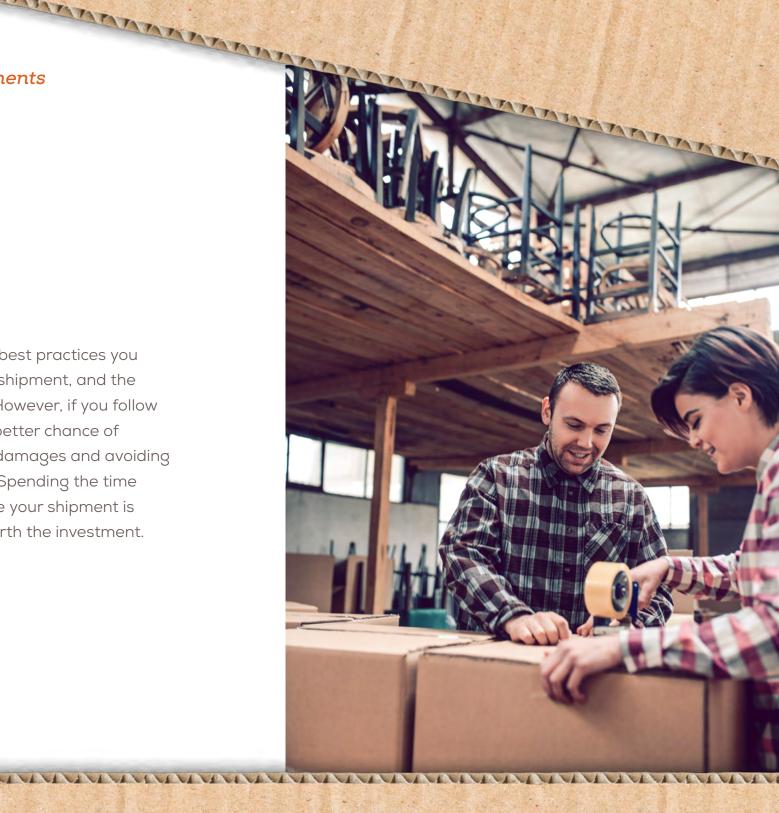
You may also want to consider crating if you're shipping fragile freight. First, select a crate that is constructed from quality lumber. Most carriers will recommend plywood rather than oriented strand board (OSB), medium-density fiberboard (MDF), or particleboard. You'll want to avoid crates that have a lot of knots or have the fasteners anchored in knots. Your crate should also have interlocking corners and diagonal braces on each panel.

Lastly, you want a crate that is sized appropriately. Keep excess space inside the crate to a minimum to prevent the contents from shifting. Make sure you pack heavier items on the bottom and light items on top, just like in pallet stacking. In addition, use void fill and cushioning to protect your contents from movement.



in conclusion

When you don't follow these best practices you are rolling the dice with your shipment, and the odds won't be in your favor. However, if you follow these guidelines you have a better chance of protecting your freight from damages and avoiding the dreaded claims process. Spending the time and money up front to ensure your shipment is packaged correctly is well worth the investment.





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