

PACKAGING AND LABELLING GOODS FOR DESPATCH

It's all basic stuff, but over packaging costs money, and under packaging can result in damage and can end up in tears. So just how much effort should go into packaging. Much of it's down to cost. There is obviously no point in spending £5 on packaging a £4 item... it doesn't make sense. However if the item is of no intrinsic value but has a personal value it's worth spending that extra bit to protect it. Before you sell items, sit and think about the packaging and the value, in both £s and personal value. It's a cost that has to be covered.

Guidelines for Good Quality Packaging

All Carriers are committed to delivering your parcels with speed and care. However, during the transit process parcels may be handled several times. It is therefore important that all items are adequately packed. Below are some tips that will help you make sure your package arrives at its destination in the best possible condition and on time.

Useful Packaging Tips *

- ★ Use a rigid box with flaps intact.
- ★ Choose the size of the box according to its content. Under-filled boxes are likely to collapse, overloaded ones may burst.
- ★ Always use high quality materials for your package. Consider strength, cushioning, and durability.
- ★ Avoid using cloth/fabric bags
- ★ Use a good quality adhesive tape to seal your parcel.
- ★ Do not consider "Fragile" and "Handle with care" labels as a substitute for careful packaging. They are only appropriate for information purposes.
- ★ For small lightweight items try ready-to-use **Courier/Mail packs**. Most Carriers will make them available free of charge. Once sealed they are very secure waterproof. Mailpacks are

usually available for documents up to 1 kilo in weight and courier packs up to 5 kilos. Some carriers offer courier packs up to 10 kilos, but beware these are often not sufficient for such weights.

- ★ Some Carriers offer **Letter envelopes**. Self seal rigid board envelope, again often provided free of charge by your local depot. They measure 36x25cm and they can be used for carrying goods with a maximum weight of 1Kg.
- ★ It is important when using Courier/Mail Packs that items are still adequately packed for protection within the pack. Glass and liquids should never travel this way.
- * *Please note that most carriers will accept no liability for the packaging advice that they provide. The customer is responsible for ensuring packaging and labelling is adequate for transportation.*

ADVICE

Packaging Tools and Advice *

There are many packaging solutions for the protection of your goods. As your parcel is transported, it may be exposed to adverse environments caused by weather conditions and transport vibrations, so correct packing is vital.

External Packaging

Use a Corrugated Carton! Corrugated cartons are the most common and the most suitable way to pack your consignments. The more times a box is used, the more it loses its original protective qualities, so a previously used box may not adequately protect your consignment. If you must reuse a box, make sure it is rigid and in excellent condition with no punctures, tears, rips or corner damage and that all flaps are intact. Remove any labels and all other old markings from the box. Double-wall corrugated cartons provide enhanced strength, which make them far more suitable for the transport of heavy items.

Original Manufacturers' Packaging

The original manufacturer's packaging is usually designed for shipments on pallets instead of single piece consignments. Additionally, they are designed to ship the product once, not a multiple number of times. Reusing the original equipment manufacturer's packaging to send the item through parcel delivery network can increase the risk of product damage. Only if the manufacturer's box has been specially designed to withstand impact and is in new condition should it be used by itself.

Double Boxing

An option that includes the use of original manufacturer's packaging is double boxing. All electronic equipment should be double boxed. Always make sure that the original packaging is in good condition and that the internal foam is not cracked or broken. Use a new corrugated carton that is at least 15cm longer, wider and higher than the original manufacturer's box. Fill the bottom of the new carton with at least 7cm of cushioning such as loose fill expanded polystyrene 'peanuts' or other suitable material. Do not use crumpled or shredded paper. The original manufacturer's box is placed on top of the cushioning material and in the centre of the new carton, allowing for at least 7cm of cushioning around the remaining five sides of the package. Fill the remaining empty space in the package with more cushioning material.

Padded Bags

It is recommended that protective bags be used to send books, diskettes, videos etc. Padded bags, using recycled paper fibres for protection and a heavy-duty kraft outer is a common choice. A lightweight bag lined with bubble film on the inside to absorb impact is recommended where a stronger bag is desired. Most padded bags can be inserted into a Mailpack or Courierpack and offer additional security and protection.

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Secure Your Package

For the safety and security of your consignment, correct sealing of your box is just as important as proper cushioning. A good seal will strengthen the box. To close a box securely, do not use masking tape, cellophane tape, duct tape, string or paper over-wrap. Use a strong polypropylene or PVC "box sealing" tape 5 cm or more in width.

Internal Packaging

Provide Internal Protection

It's important that you cushion the contents of your package properly. Please be sure that you wrap each item separately. Fragile articles need both suitable separation from each other and clearance from the corners and sides of the box. It is recommended that you leave a space of at least 5cm between the outer container and the product inside. This space should be filled with internal protection of some type. The following are the most common purpose-made products to be found on the market:

Polyethylene Bubble Wrap

Made of pockets of air distributed on a plastic film. Designed to protect and cushion lightweight items from shock, vibration and abrasion. Used in multiple wraps and layers to ensure that the item is completely protected, especially on corners and edges.

Polyethylene Foam

For wrapping delicate items where a soft non-abrasive and lightweight cushioning material is required.

Inflatable packaging (air bags)

Used primarily as void-fill materials for lightweight items. Not recommended for items with sharp corners or edges.

Loose fill expanded polystyrene "peanuts"

Used as a void filling material of cases and containers, for lightweight items. Overfill the box with peanuts, gently close the flaps, and seal securely

Do not use with flat or narrow products that may move to the edge or bottom of the carton in transit

Due to the shifting and settling properties of peanuts, it is recommended that a minimum of three inches of cushioning be used around the contents

Engineered foam enclosures

Materials may include expanded polystyrene,

polyethylene, polypropylene or co-polymers enclosures should be pre-engineered for specific products.

Foam-in-Place

Foam-in-Place, foam sprayed into the box or mixed in packets, is formed by a chemical mixture that expands and forms a protective mould around contents.

The foam forms a mould around any product, supports corners and protects edges.

Corrugated paper rolls and inserts

may be added to the package to increase strength and improve package performance.

Crumpled kraft wrapping paper or newspaper

can be used primarily as a void-fill material for light to medium weight, non-fragile items and items that are suitable for such packing materials. Must be tightly crumpled. Place at least 10 cm of paper between the item and outer box

Cushion wrap

A single faced corrugated paper coated with cohesive. Ideal for packing of books, CD's, videos etc. Make sure you use enough cushioning material to ensure that the contents do not move when you shake the container.

Note: Fragile objects such as electronics, glass and ceramics require special packaging with added cushioning and/or a double box for safe carriage.

Liquids

Please note that liquids are not to be sent in any transit involving sea/water crossing. Many liquid containers are not designed to endure the transit process, which includes sorting impact, over-the-road vibration and other kinds of package handling situations. The original manufacturers package is usually designed for carriage on pallets, not single-piece consignments. All liquid containers must be securely sealed in order to avoid leaks. Wrap the containers in an impermeable material and add sufficient absorbent material to absorb the liquid in case of breakage. Bottles should be separated using cushioning materials such as foam or corrugated cardboard to prevent them touching each other and sealed in a plastic bag to avoid damaging surrounding parcels.

Weight and Size

The chargeable weight of an individual parcel is

the gross or volumetric weight rounded up to the nearest kilo. The chargeable weight of a multi-parcel consignment is the aggregate total of each individual package rounded up to the nearest full kilo. Volumetric weight will be applied where the volume of any single parcel exceeds 6,000 cubic centimetres per kilo. (This figure may vary from carrier to carrier and will certainly increase for movement by air.

Fragile parcel

How to Measure Your Parcel Size

It is recommended that you calculate the Volumetric Weight for every parcel that you send then compare this to its actual weight. The greater weight of the two is used to calculate the price that we charge you. Volumetric Weight is calculated using the formula below:

Length x Width x Height divided by 6000
= Volumetric Weight.

Weight and Size Restrictions for Parcels

Many Carriers have limitations on individual carton weights, lengths and cubes, such as...

- ★ Items over 2.5 metres in length
- ★ Single items over 30 kilos
- ★ Consignments over 100 kilos

It's important that you check these restrictions with your Carrier prior to despatch. It's a fact that some Carriers will hold goods with under declared weights and sizes.

ALL GOODS DESPATCHED should have a full delivery address, a full senders address, including postal codes. The package or online booking form should where possible have contact telephone numbers for both the sender and the receiver, preferably a mobile number that is likely to be answered when out of the office or home.

Restrictions on Movements

All carriers have restrictions on the type of goods moved - Hazardous, Liquids, Livestock, Drugs, Gold/Bullion, Fresh food, and many other types of goods have either restrictions on movement and or liability restrictions... Check it out before sending !

Remember - Your carrier has a better chance of fulfilling his side of the delivery transaction if given all the correct information, and the goods are packaged correctly.

We hope you may find these notes helpful.
Euro-Tran Despatch