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Measures to augment proper packaging of cargo for safe transportation



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Overview

Cargoes come in different sizes and shapes and each has its own packaging requirement. Whatever the type and nature of the cargo, the top priority always is to get the same delivered to the customer in the same condition as it left the warehouse. Proper packing is the one of the most important factors in achieving this. With proper packaging, not only the potential damage to the cargo can be minimised, but also the many and high costs associated with such damages can be avoided.

We at Liberty Videocon General Insurance value the safe transportation of your cargo; and to enable the same, intend to suggest some useful measures to ensure adequate and proper packaging of cargo. We sincerely hope that the measures suggested in this document will help in achieving safe packaging of cargo before its transportation.

Why Package your Cargo?

As we all know, travelling by road, rail, air or sea is not a perfectly smooth ride - all the little bumps and vibrations enroute will jostle your cargo around with the potential to cause damage. But, with correct packaging, damage to your cargo can be minimised. Moreover, the real cost of damages, which is much higher than one usually perceives, can be avoided.

These costs of cargo damage are:

- Cost of replacing damaged goods
- Additional freight cost for replacement goods
- Time lost in arranging replacements
- Time spent dealing with unhappy customers
- Disposal of damaged cargo
- Injury to personnel handling goods due to hazards ranging from rough surfaces to unstable loads.

Types of Packing

From a simple cardboard box to large wooden crates, packaging comes in many different forms to suit various needs.

- **Cartons:** These make your cargo easier to handle by keeping loose items together. They also provide protection to the display packaging of your product and allow the use of other packaging aids such as foam packing.
- **Pallets:** Whether you are moving boxes or a heavy piece of machinery, the simple pallet is one of the most commonly used types of packaging. Packing your cargo on a pallet provides stability, making it easier to handle. Also, it is to be ensured that the pallet is in good condition, the weight of your goods is evenly distributed, the goods don't hang over the pallet edges and the top surface is flat if possible.
- **Crates:** These can be made to fit any type of cargo. Solid walls and strong weight-bearing structures make loading easier and provide complete protection. It is recommended to use a professional crating company, unless you have experience in properly making a crate yourself.
- **Shrink Wrapping:** These are ideal for protection of the outer surface and providing stability for palletised cargo. They prevent rubbing on cartons, reduce the risk of items being separated from the rest of the order and provide a surface for labelling to be affixed.
- **Banding / Strapping:** Either made of steel or plastic, these are used to stop cargo from slipping off the pallet or to bind bundles together.
- **Labelling:** These ensure your goods communicate everything cargo handlers need to know about your cargo. For example, delivery address and any handling instructions like fragile, top stow only, this way up, etc. Besides, there are customs regulations regarding cargo labeling which need to be strictly enforced. For instance, many countries require that the country of origin of the cargo be clearly labeled on each imported package. Most freight forwarders and export packing specialists can supply the necessary information regarding specific regulations.

Points to Consider

There are many things that you need to take into consideration when packaging your cargo.

- **Storage / Handling Environment:** Cargo depots will have trucks, fork hoists and even rail units running through their site. Shrink wrapping your cargo will protect it from diesel dust and fumes put out by these vehicles.
- **Road Environment:** Pot holes, windy roads and crazy drivers are obstacles that truck drivers will face. Pack your goods with stability in mind to ensure a safe journey.
- **Display Packaging:** If cartons are being moved for display

in retail stores, shrink wrap and outer boxes will provide protection to keep your goods looking brand new.

- **Labelling:** Affixing freight labels to your goods will ensure your goods are handled correctly and delivered to the correct place. Ensure that the labels are easily visible. With fragile cargo packed into cartons, it is good to label the box with a picture of the cargo. Do not affix labels directly to the surface of your goods, as this could cause damage when the labels are removed.
- **Size / Dimensions:** Freight cost is determined by the volume of your cargo as if it were square, i.e. measured to the longest point for all dimensions. So pack well to avoid having parts sticking out which will reduce the chance of damage and incurring extra costs.

Improve Your Packing

Take some time to look at your current packaging. Can you make any changes to what you are currently doing? Talk to your freight forwarder and see if they can suggest any other improvements. Correctly packaging your cargo will prevent damage, save you money and prevent injury. One of the important objectives in trade is to 'deliver your customers cargo on time, every time, complete and damage free'.

Packaging Do's and Don'ts

Do's

- Choose the right size and material for the package to hold the content. Remember to leave adequate space for proper cushioning.
- Balance the weight and the strength of the boxes, and also the nature of your shipments for proper packaging. Use corrugated boxes for most common items.
- Cushioning materials is a must. Use fillers, sponges, shredded or crumpled newspapers.
- Use water-proof and pressure sensitive tapes for sealing your boxes.
- Strap the heavy boxes to strengthen the package.
- Stuff cushioning materials in hollow and fragile items. Place them in the center of the box and pack the rest of the box with fillers. Don't let them hit the sides.
- Tightly seal any liquid containers and make sure they do not leak. Wrap them in plastic if possible.
- Wrap any sharp objects with layers of papers or cardboards and secure with adhesive tapes so that they do not cut the packaging and damage other shipments.
- Place documents on cardboards before putting them into the flyers. This will ensure they are not bent or folded easily.
- Make sure cushioning is done between multiple items when they are stacked together in one shipment.
- Indicate which side of the box should be on top. Place the consignment notes on the top of the boxes to increase the chances of being placed at a proper orientation.

- Packaging for expensive gifts should be packed properly to prevent any unnecessary attention.
- Avoid using round cylinders, try triangular tube ones instead so that they will not move about easily during transit.
- Complete shipper and consignee information clearly. Make sure proper contact details are provided.
- Complete the address clearly and completely, using uppercase letters when handwriting labels to improve readability for personnel.
- If a recycled box is used, make sure all old labels are removed or crossed out. Make sure extra tape or strapping is added to strengthen the packaging of the shipment.

Don'ts

- Don't ship items until you have added the sender and consignee information including contact telephone numbers.
- Don't use non water-proof bags.
- Don't ship liquids or spillable items in envelopes or any other container not capable of retaining the liquid.
- Don't ship fragile or breakable items in envelopes. Always place inside an oversized outer container with plenty of cushioning all around the item inside the outer package.
- Don't use paper-back or house-hold cellophane tapes which are not strong. Seal the shipments properly.
- Don't use strings or ropes to seal any corrugated boxes, they can easily damage the boxes.
- Don't consider 'Fragile' and 'Handle With Care' labels as a substitute for careful packaging. They are only appropriate for information purposes.
- Don't cover the shipper and consignee information on the labels.



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