

Packaging Tips for Parcels

When sending your Goods, there are several easy steps to make sure your goods are more secure and easier to transport:

CHOOSING THE BOX/CARTON

Your goods may be handled many times by many different hands before it gets to the end destination. Please ensure for your benefit that the box/carton you choose to package your goods in is the correct size for the item you are sending. There are different sized boxes for a reason. Choose a box that has enough room for your item and some protective packaging. Also try and package heavy items into smaller boxes (preferably double-walled boxes) and lightweight bulkier items into larger boxes.

The box/carton must be **sturdy** and **robust** and preferably 'corrugated' with flaps intact. Never use boxes that are damaged, thin, old, worn or damp; and never use fruit boxes or miscellaneous boxes from a supermarket. If in doubt, try your local storage as they also sell packaging materials and boxes.

Don't make the carton **too heavy**. This may cause issues in a few ways:

- The carton may break at the bottom,
- Sortation staff in depots may drop it accidentally (because they've underestimated the weight),
- Your carton may be loaded into the 'bulk freight' section of a vehicle which means your carton sits amongst heavy and large freight, with the possibility of damage increasing.

If it is a heavy carton, mark it as **'HEAVY'** in bold writing and write the weight next to it. For Occupational Health and Safety reasons, most transport companies require a maximum liftable weight per item of 17kgs. If you have a carton weighing more than 17kg, consider breaking it down into 2 items (each less than 17kgs). Businesses may consider strapping a carton heavier than 17kgs to a skid (i.e. a small version of a pallet), enabling staff to utilise forklifts to lift the item. If you cannot break the carton down, you should have someone available at the pickup and delivery addresses to help the driver load/unload the item.

If you still have the original box for a product then it is recommended to use it. Especially if you still have the original polystyrene protection that came with the box (as this packaging was specifically designed to protect the product).

If you have to re-use an old box, make sure that all old bar-coded labels or address labels have been completely removed to avoid sortation issues and delays to your goods. Also ensure there are no holes/tears or corner dents that could ultimately weaken the box during transport.

PACKAGING YOUR GOODS

When sending your goods around UK or worldwide with a courier/freight company, your items will be handled numerous times before they arrive to the destination. There are major differences between a furniture removalist company and a courier/freight company.

Furniture removalists generally take a full load from your home/office to the destination in the same truck. Your goods may be handled 2-4 times from pickup to delivery.

If you are sending across UK or worldwide with a *courier/freight company*, your goods may be loaded and unloaded anywhere from 4-15 times in and out of up to 5 different trucks or rail containers. Hence it is **extremely important** to package your goods well for the rigorous journey that they are about to take.

A sturdy box/carton is your first requirement, then the way you package your goods is also important:

Don't Overload the Box

Don't overload the box with too many items or too much weight. It's always better to package multiple items individually (if possible) and use more than one box if required. This way each individual item can receive the benefit of proper protection from packaging material and the box.

Original Packaging Material/Boxes

Sending equipment such as DVD players, TV's, computers and electrical equipment is best sent in its original packaging and box. If you don't have this, then you can purchase packaging material and boxes from storage companies or you can contact us. Bubble-wrap is a must for sensitive or fragile items.

Using Household Packaging Material

If you don't want to go to the expense of purchasing packaging material, a last resort is to use shredded paper or scrunched up newspaper. The problem with this type of packaging material is it does not hold its shape and can become compacted during transportation. This creates a void inside the box which can jeopardize the integrity of the box and make it more likely to become crushed or open-up during transit.

Cushioning the Contents

Whatever packaging material is used, ensure there is enough *cushioning* material around the item/s so they don't move if the box is shaken or bumped. A recommendation is to cushion with at least 5-8 centimetres of packaging material all around the item (fragile items require more cushioning). Quite often during a long journey in a truck, there will be 'shunting' when the truck stops. Cushioning is very important to stop shock from the outside, passing through to the contents causing damage (this is especially the case for fragile items). A recommendation in the transport industry is that all items are packaged to withstand a one metre drop.

Securing the Box

Proper closure of the box is essential for safe transportation. Use a 'wide' pressure sensitive plastic tape (this can be purchased from storage or packaging companies). *Do not use masking tape, Scotch tape, duct tape or string.* When taping the box, ensure you go all the way around the box and along the seals (particularly for re-used or old boxes) to stop the box opening during transit.

ADDRESSING/LABELING THE GOODS

When you have packaged your goods ready for transport, the next step is to address them correctly to ensure they arrive at the destination and on-time.

Firstly if the goods are fragile, ensure you mark the carton as **FRAGILE** with either coloured Fragile Tape (which can be purchased from packaging supply stores or stationery retail outlets like Officeworks), or write FRAGILE on the box in a distinctive location with a coloured marker pen. You want your item to 'stand out' so sortation staff in transport depots notice your goods and its fragile nature.

Secondly if you are re-using second hand boxes, make sure there are no old address labels or old barcode identifier labels on the box. This will lead to confusion with sortation staff/drivers and will delay or cause issues with your delivery.

Depending on the transport company you use, most will require you to complete a consignment-note/docket for the delivery. The consignment-note is the vital piece of information the company needs to effect correct delivery. You will need to complete information such as:

- sender's name/address and postcode/contact name/phone number,
- receiver's name/address and postcode/contact name/phone number,
- the number of items sent,
- the weight of each item,
- the dimensions of each item,
- the type of transport service you require (e.g. road freight, air freight, local courier, overnight satchel, international, etc.),
- and finally you need to sign and date the consignment-note.

Consignment-notes will usually have a:

- Sender's copy,
- Receiver's Copy
- Proof of Delivery copy
- (and sometimes a Head office/Charge copy).

Our online services at DTD Courier & Cargo will also generate the consignment-label/s for you automatically once you make the booking online. Then you can easily print the label from your home computer and attach it to the goods ready for pickup or drop off.

These days, nearly all transport companies will have a barcode on their consignment-notes to enable tracking services for customers. Although the promise of worldwide tracking exists with us, the actual truth is that many small towns in regional or rural areas aren't tracked electronically due to small depots and agents not having 'hand-held electronic scanners' available to scan the consignment-note barcodes. Although this means electronic tracking is not always available, most carriers have other 'manual' manifest systems available in these regional areas to inform customers of their goods whereabouts or ETA if required.

If you have more than one item in a consignment delivery (to one receiver), place the consignment-notes/labels in the same place on each item, especially if all items are identical. This makes it easy for the sortation staff in depots to know where to look for the receiver address as they are sorting freight. Do not place the consignment-note/address label over a seam or closure or on top of sealing tape. It is also a good idea to add a sheet of paper with your name and phone number and the receiver address inside the carton in case the consignment-note/address label on the outside of the box comes off during transit.

TRANSPORT INDUSTRY TERMINOLOGY

Authority to Leave	the goods will be left at the receivers address should no-one be there to accept the goods
Check-weigh	goods have been checked for correct weight either manually by hand or through a calibrated checking machine in a transport depot
Check-cube	goods have been checked for correct dimensions either manually by hand or through a calibrated checking machine in a transport depot
Con-note	the Consignment-note
Consignment number	the number on the consignment-note that is used for tracking or identifying the consignment

Cubic weight	the volumetric weight of the item using a formula to multiply the three dimensions (length x width x height) by a cubic conversion factor.
Deadweight	the actual weight of the item
Despatch label	address label
ETA	Estimated Time of Delivery
ETP	Estimated Time of Pickup
First Class	an overnight or same day service nationally
Fuel Levy	an additional charge applied to freight rates to offset increasing fuel costs affecting transport carriers
Linehaul	the journey in a truck, aeroplane or rail between major ports (e.g. UK TO CANADA)
POD	Proof of Delivery or Receipted Delivery