

# Packaging and Labeling

## Packaging

Shippers should be aware of several potential problems when packaging cargos for any form of transport:

- Breakage.
- Moisture.
- Pilferage.
- Excess weight.
- Spoilage/Expiration.
- Temperature sensitive items.

Any and all packaging should meet the needs of the shipped item, the recipient, the duration of the transport, and the method of shipping. Packaging should:

- Meet shipping regulations.
- Ensure proper handling.
- Conceal the identity of the contents (where appropriate).
- Help receivers identify shipments.
- Insure compliance with environmental and safety standard.

Not only does the cargo need to be adequately packed but instructions be given to all parties handling the cargo at some stage of the venture to ensure safe delivery.

### Packaging Types and Terms

- **Outer Packing/Outer Packaging** - The outer most enclosure that contains or prevents unintended release of contents
- **Over-Packaging/Overpacking** - Items that are packaged in more than one layer or enclosure. Example: A box within a box, or multiple sacs within a larger carton. Over-packaging is common in handling of [dangerous goods](#).
- **Handling Unit** - The lowest unit at which cargo is handled, usually at the box or carton level.
- **Unit of Accounting** - the lowest level inventory unit that is tracked and accounted for.
- **Shipping Unit** - the lowest unit at which cargo is handled for shipping - may be the same as the handling unit, or may be accounted for at the pallet/Unit Load Device level.
- **Common Package Types**
  - Bale/Bundle
  - Carton/Box
  - Roll
  - Pallet
  - Set/Kit
  - Crate
  - Drum
  - Bag/Sack
  - Loose/Bulk/Individual Unit

## Labelling

Labelling for transport is an important consideration. Knowing that cargo is often broken down or shipped loose means that shippers must adequately mark cartons to facilitate tracking of

cargo, especially for cargo transported by air. Insurance brokers also have the right to dishonour a claim of damage to goods, due to inadequate packing and marking for the selected mode of transport. It is strongly advised that all cargo intended for air transport be labelled at the level of the carton or handling unit, and should have some - if not all - of the corresponding data:

- Shipper.
- Logo of agency.
- Intended Destination.
- Items in package (if required)
- Packing List Number/Consignment Number.
- Weight and measurement of the package.
- Package contents (if appropriate to list externally without fear of pilferage).
- Numbered "Package 1 of X".
- Special handling requirements (temperature control, fragile, etc).
- [Dangerous goods](#) contained within.

Properly labelled packages will help reduce loss while in transit. Professional freight forwarding services tend to be extremely good at keeping large consignments together throughout the course of an air movement. Depending on the arrangement with the forwarder, large consignments can be split into multiple smaller shipments, and will be re-consolidated prior to delivery. In emergencies however, movement can be chaotic and cargo frequently delayed or lost. The more visible and easily identifiable relief cargo is, the more likely it is to reach its final destination.

[The International organisation of Standardisation \(ISO\)](#) has designed graphic symbols that are placed on packing units to instruct cargo handlers how to handle the cargo. These symbols are used worldwide and is a common language understood by all.

Any and all cargo containing dangerous goods being packaged for transport should be properly labelled according to the equivalent standard of the method of shipping. Information on proper labelling of dangerous goods of can be found in the [dangerous goods section of this guide](#).