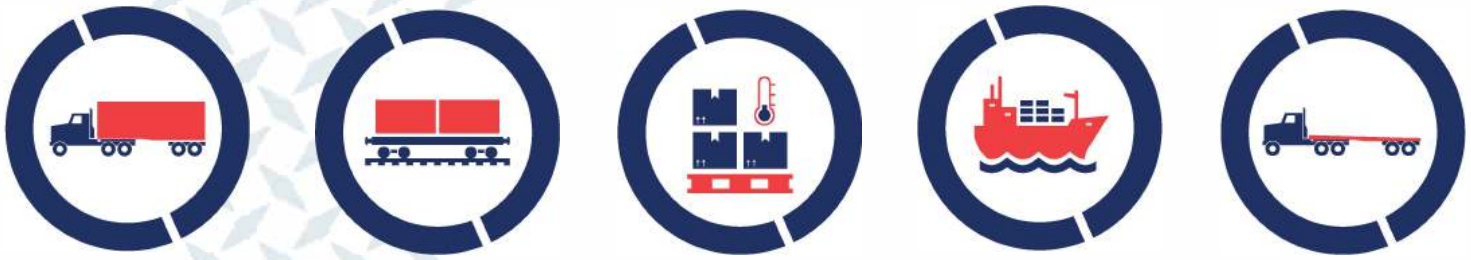

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO FREIGHT SHIPPING

CHOPTANK

DELIVERING RESULTS. DAILY.

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WHAT IS FREIGHT?

Freight transport is the physical process of transporting commodities and merchandise goods and cargo. The term shipping originally referred to transport by sea but in American English, it has been extended to refer to transport by land or air (International English: "carriage") as well. "Logistics", a term borrowed from the military environment, is also used in the same sense.

In current times freight refers to B2B/commercial shipments that are larger in quantity or larger than your typical parcel size, or weight, handled by standard carriers. Goods are put into cardboard boxes, loaded on pallets, and moved using many different modes of transportation.

Freight vs. Parcel

Parcels are smaller, lighter, individual shipments handled by carriers such as the US Postal Service, UPS, and FedEx. Consumers can drop off these shipments at various locations at their convenience and pricing is determined by dimensional weight or the actual weight. Commercial shippers, or business's will typically have a daily pickup arranged with carriers such as UPS or FedEx. FedEx and UPS specific size and weight limits on the parcels. Anything larger is considered a freight shipment.

Freight pricing has a multitude of factors including distance, size, class, fuel and many others that are constantly changing due to the marketplace. Shipments are managed by a third-party logistics (3PL) company or directly with the carrier. The third party manages everything including how the freight is to be loaded, scheduling delivering and transport time, any special equipment needed, and other necessary pieces of information to facilitate the delivery. Click here to get freight quotes.

NOTE: If viewing this digitally, there are links throughout the document which provide further information on the topic at hand. If printed, see the resource page for corresponding web sites.

TYPES OF FREIGHT AND FREIGHT MODES

LTL (Less Than Truckload)

LTL freight includes freight shipments that do not completely occupy an entire truck trailer. Mos freight trailers on the road today are 8’ – 8.5’ wide, 12.5’ – 13.5’ high, and 40’ – 53’ long. This allows carriers to load several LTL shipments into a single truck and service multiple customers and destinations. LTL freight shipments typically weigh between 200 and 10,000 lbs. Common LTL carriers include Con-way, Old Dominion Freight Lines, YRC Freight, FedEx Freight, and many more. Click here to get quotes on LTL shipments.

Partial Truckload

Partial truckload shipments are shipments that don’t completely fill the truck, but tend to remain on a single truck similar to full truckload shipments. As a result, they are subjected to less handling than LTL shipments. Average partial truckload shipments fall between LTL and FTL sizes and weight. The core difference between LTL and Partial TL is the way it is transported rather than its size or weight.

FTL (Full Truckload)

Truckload freight includes all freight shipments that solely occupy a trailer. These are large volume or weight shipments from point to point. Weight limits depend on the weight of the vehicle and local laws, but typically are around 34,000 – 45,000 lbs. in the US. The mos typical truckload shipments are transported via dry van, flatbed, and refrigerated trailers. Click here to get quotes on FTL shipments.

DOWNLOAD NOW

Trans Mode Cheat Sheet

Air Freight

Air freight is freight transported via cargo plane. Goods are transported first to the origin airport then are flown to the destination airport where they are shipped via truck to a final destination. This is the fastest method of delivering goods between two destinations but also one of the costliest. Air freight can transport items from one port to another in a matter of days rather than weeks for sea freight. There are some limitations to air freight, such as hazardous materials and other prohibited cargo. Click here to get quotes on air shipments.

Ocean Freight / Sea Freight

Ocean freight is freight transported via ship from port to port. Shipments are organized into two primary categories; FCL (full container load) and LCL (less than container load). Containers are typically 20', 40', or 53' in length. Providers often offer expedited and economy options depending on your needs. An obvious limit to sea based freight is the proximity to a serviceable port, but is overcome by using traditional land based transportation to get goods to, and from, ports. Click here to get quotes on port shipments.

Rail Freight

Rail freight consists of goods carried via rail car over land. Shipments are arranged from individual rail cars to entire trains depending on the needs of the shipper. Individual rail car shipments can be carried by a wide array of specialty rail cars such as triple decker car carriers, intermodal cars, and ore cars. Trains can only carry goods where there are tracks. However, trucks are used to transport freight to and from railways. Click here to get quotes on rail shipments.

Intermodal Freight

Intermodal freight is any combination of transportation modes; specifically truck, train, ship, and plane. Intermodal allows shipments to maximize the benefits of each mode to ensure the most economical and timely outcome. Intermodal also can take a single origin shipment and deliver it to multiple destinations. Limitations of intermodal include several handling events which can result in breakage along with specific organization requirements of each mode. Click here to get quotes on intermodal shipments.

COMMON TRUCK FREIGHT & TRAILER TYPES

Dry Van Freight (see Trailer 101 Guide)

Dry van trailers are covered trailers with a fat deck. Van trailers are the mos common type of trailer utilized for freight transportation in the US. The box covers the load from the elements and helps to secure the load.

Refrigerated (Reefer) Freight (see Trailer 101 Guide)

Refrigerated freight includes shipments that require a temperature regulated trailer. Refrigerated trailers have a large capacity climate control unit mounted on the front of the trailer and run off of a secondary fuel supply. The trailers can be partitioned for zoned temperature control. Refrigerated shipments generally consist of perishable food stuffs, medical supplies, or chemicals.

Oversized Freight (see Heavy-Haul 101 Guide)

Oversized freight is any load that exceeds the standard legal size and/or weight limits for a particular route. In mos US sates this includes loads that are wider than 8’ 6" or taller than 13’ 6". Loads that are excessively long (combination length) or heavy (total or per axle) also fall into the oversized category. The regulations can vary sate by sate. Plus, bridges and roadways also have limitations that mus be addressed. As a result, careful consideration is given to planning specific routes. As an additional safety measure the truck is accompanied by one or multiple pilot cars that act to warn motorists, control the transportation, and ensure route safety.

Flatbed Freight (see Trailer 101 Guide)

Flatbed freight is any load that is put onto a flatbed trailer. Flatbed loads need to be secured by the driver and are open to the elements. Flatbeds, due to their open nature, allow certain loads, such as large generators, to be loaded with greater speed and safety since a crane can be used rather than a forklift. They can also be loaded from both sides and can accommodate full width loads.
Flatbeds are very common in the US trucking industry and widely used for construction and industrial loads.

Lowboy Freight (see Trailer 101 Guide)

Lowboy loads are very similar to flatbed loads. Lowboy trailers have a much lower deck height which effectively lowers the total height of the load to avoid falling into oversized load restrictions. This allows taller loads to be transported without the extra costs and safety issues of an oversized load.

FREIGHT CLASS

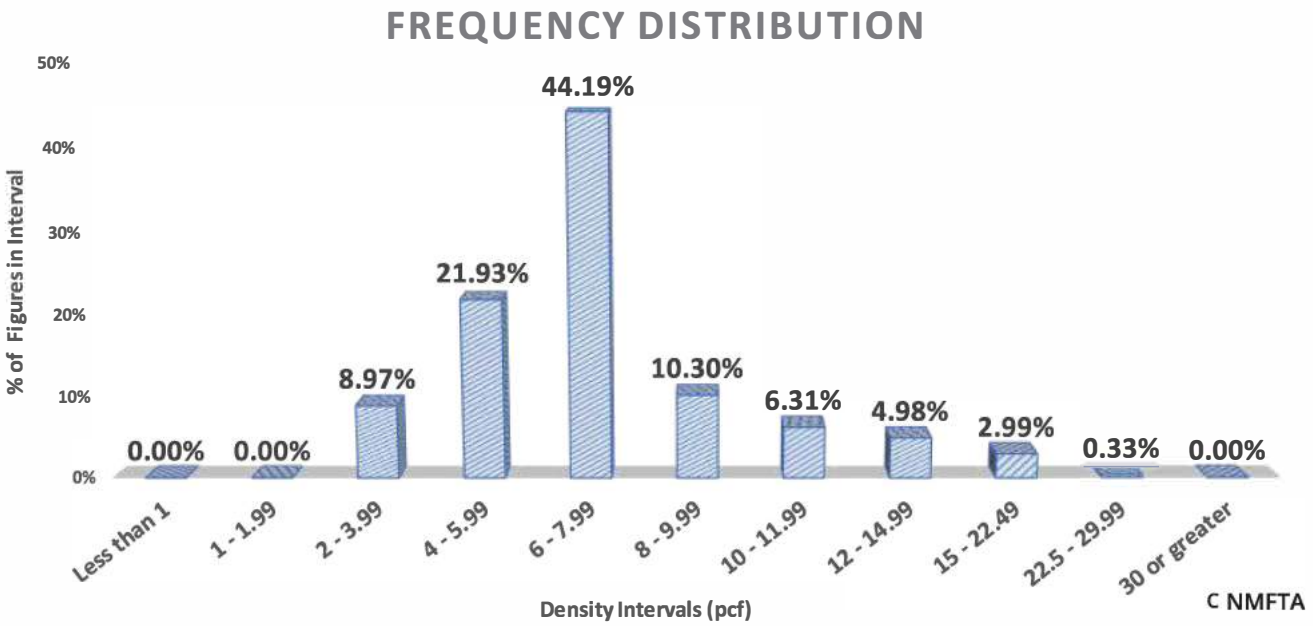
The National Motor Freight Classification®, or NMFC® for short, is a system applied to cargo to allow the LTL industry to quickly organize, price, and understand shipments. The rating is known industry wide as freight class. There are 18 classes, ranging from Class 50 to Class 500. These classes are determined by four characteristics:

1. Density
2. Handling
3. Stow-ability
4. Liability / Value

FREIGHT CLASS

Freight Density

Freight density is the ratio of weight to volume expressed in per cubic foot (pcf) measurements. Shipments that take up a lot of space for their weight will be in a higher freight class and generally cost more to ship. Shipments that are heavy and compact will be in a lower freight class and generally less expensive to ship. The Commodity Classification Standards Board, or CCSB, samples numerous shipments for both the pcf density and the frequency of that particular density being shipped. For example, night lights packaged in boxes range in density between 2.17 to 22.50 pcf, with an average density of 7.09 pcf according to CCSB research. As you can see from the graph below the vast majority of densities were between 4 and 10 pcf.



The classification example, night lights, and specific data in this section including density measurements, frequency distribution, and specific findings are courtesy of the ©NMFTA Commodity Classification Standards Board and used with their permission. Source: ©NMFTA – Commodity Classification Standards Board – Docket 2015-2 Sbj. 10, Addendum

FREIGHT CLASS CONT'D

Handling

Commodities that require special handling will typically have higher freight classes. Handling takes into account how normal the typical handling requirements are for a particular good. Goods that are tendered into typical packages such as boxes or crates loaded onto pallet skids, aren't fragile or drop sensitive, will get lower freight class ratings compared to more difficult shipments. For our example above, night lights are tendered into boxes and placed onto pallets.

Stow-ability

Stow-ability is measured by how easily other freight can be sored adjacent or on top of the packaged goods. Items that are very durable or packaged in rigid load-bearing containers will earn lower freight class ratings than those that cannot be sacked or otherwise prohibit additional capacity from being utilized. Our example of night lights, when tendered in boxes, creates a fat load- bearing surface for other freight to be sacked onto.

Liability

Liability is a measurement of risk. Risk typically involves shipment value (expressed per pound), susceptibility to damage, and the associated claim rates reported by carriers for that particular good. Additional risk factors include commodities that are perishable, hazardous, or unusually susceptible to theft. Overall, all carriers reported zero claims with night lights.

Freight Class *- Subject to Change*

The CCSB decided to change the freight class of night lights from 85 to 125. While there were zero claims and no significant stow-ability or handling issues, the CCSB decided to make the change based on their analysis of shipment density.

(CCSB policy calls for establishing or amending classification provisions to reflect a commodity's known transportation characteristics. Information of record indicates that night-lights range in density from 2.17 to 22.50 pcf, with an average density of 7.09pcf, and no unusual or significant handling, stowability or liability characteristics. As shown in the frequency distribution above, the preponderance of density figures are concentrated within a narrow range around the overall average. An average density of 7.09 pcf is generally associated with a class 125 under CCSB density guidelines, which call for a minimum average density of 7 pcf. This proposal would assign item 109880 class 125 in lieu of the current class 85.)

Source: ©NMFTA - CCSB Docket 2015-2, Subject 10 – Analysis (with Addendum Changes)

Examples of Freight Class for Various Goods

Freight Class	Example Shipments	Weight Range/Cubic Foot
50	Nuts, bolts, steel rods	More than 50 LBS
55	Hardwood flooring, paint	35-50 LBS
60	Ceramic tiles, bottle liquids	30-35 LBS
65	Car parts, boxes of books	22.5-30 LBS
70	Food items, boxed paper	15-22.5 LBS
77.5	Tires, bathroom fixtures	13.5-15 LBS
85	Engines, pharmaceuticals	12-13.5 LBS
92.5	Computers, monitors	10.5-12 LBS
100	Hides, car & boat covers	9-10.5 LBS
110	Cabinets, table drill presses	8-9 LBS
125	Toasters, blenders	7-8 LBS
150	Sheet metal, bookcases	6-7 LBS
175	Clothing, stuffed furniture	5-6 LBS
200	Aluminum parts, mattresses	4-5 LBS
250	Televisions, box springs	3-4 LBS
300	Wood cabinets, tables	2-3 LBS
400	Deer antlers, light fixtures	1-2 LBS
500	Ping pong balls, bags of gold dust	Less than 1 LB

Note: The examples above are only for conceptual understanding. Freight class varies significantly depending on the specifics of shipments. Packaging, valuations, and per-shipment density all affect the freight class of items. The reasons for the classification are the expressed opinion of Choptank, and not the CCSB.

HOW FREIGHT PRICES ARE DETERMINED

Determining the best price

There are numerous macro and microeconomic factors and variables that determine freight rates and the "market" can change daily, and sometimes, hourly. The overall economy drives total volume of shipments and the available number of "trucks" is known as capacity. Capacity gets tighter when shipping volume goes up, which can drive the price of shipping up as well. This is also heavily influenced by the season and which "lanes" you are using to ship your product. Trying to ship out of Florida during produce season creates a much higher demand, hence higher pricing. Weather, holidays, local market conditions all play a factor in market pricing. With so much changing constantly and so many variables to keep an eye on, having an experienced partner with up-to-date data and cutting-edge technology can go a long way in determining the right price to get your product shipped efficiently and at a good price.

Shipping details

You may know the cities, or "lanes" your freight is shipping to and from, but you also have to know the exact zip codes and what type of facility you are shipping in to. As previously mentioned, local conditions effect the price and so does the type of facility you are shipping too. Are you shipping directly to a retail store or a storage facility with a commercial loading dock? Is it in a commercial or residential zone? Does that facility have forklifts? Will you need to pay for "lumpers" to unload your product? All of these factors can come back to adjust your quote and affect your bottom line.

Packaged freight details

Your freight dimensions, from weight and how it's packaged, to what the product density is, can determine the rate as well. Make sure and read further into our packaging section to learn how to be accurate and efficient when packaging your product.

Types of freight rates

There are three common types of rates in the industry: contract, set and spot rates. If you are more established and have regular "lanes" you are shipping frequently you can improve your rates (most of the time) by putting out an RFP bid so providers can provide you more long-term rates (usually a year, but sometimes only 3-6 months). This certainly helps with consistency and the ability to forecast your budget, however, sometimes the "spot" market can provide cheaper rates or is just necessary to ship products when you had not planned on it. "Set" rates are somewhat in between the two and can you the same short term rates for a set period of time.

STANDARD FREIGHT PRICING FACTORS

Truckload freight has many factors discussed previously, but LTL Freight pricing involves even more factors including density, freight class, weight, fuel cost, lane balances, handling costs, speed of delivery, and what accommodations need to be made to make all of the above happen. Here are some general trends in freight pricing by factor:

Freight Class: The higher the freight class, the higher the price per pound.

Freight Density: The higher the density, the lower the price per pound.

Fuel Cost: The higher the cost of fuel, the higher the cost. This will show up as a fuel surcharge. Be aware that certain states will have higher fuel costs, such as CA, due to increased taxation. Carriers typically charge a fuel surcharge based on the price of diesel fuel for a given week.

Lane Balances: LTL carriers do not necessarily operate trucks that are fully loaded in all directions. Commonly, consumption states, such as Florida, are priced higher for inbound shipments.

Travel Distance: The longer the distance, the higher the cost. Especially if these areas do not match well with the transporters operational areas.

Shipment Weight: For a single pallet price decreases to a certain point, but then will begin to increase as you near load limits. Precursory element in freight class and density.

Shipment Time-frame: Fast delivery times may necessitate an expedited or express service which will increase prices.

Special Needs: Deliveries that require a lift gate, limited access, residential delivery, refrigeration, hazmat, and other special requirements will incur extra fees and charges. Limited access refers to a location that has a controlled entrance or limited suitability, such as a military base.

INDUSTRY GUIDELINES
TRUCKLOAD ACCESSORIAL CHARGES

n. /ak-suh-sOR-ee-uhl/

SERVICE TYPE	APPLICABLE CHARGES
Stop Charge	$50 - $70 per each additional stop
Lumper loading & Unloading	Pass through charge from labor service at consignee
Detention	*Free Time = 1-2 hours at loading, 1-2 hours at unloading Rate: $40-$50 per hour after arranged free time. **Can vary based on commodity type and company*
Layover	$200-$250. payable only if some criteria are met - Criteria vary based on situation
Truck Order-Not Used (TONU)	$250-$300 fee: Usually provider notified by noon the prior day to pick-up.
Reconsignment	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis
Return	Negotiated on a case-by-case basis

ABOVE RATES/CHARGES ARE GENERAL GUIDELINES.
CAN VARY BASED ON PROVIDER, PRODUCT AND COMPANY.

AS OF: Oct. 2020

FREIGHT CLAIMS:
Stuff happens, so be prepared.

The first question people want to know when something goes wrong is who is responsible. This happens in car accidents, bodily injury lawsuits, and of course, freight claims. In third-party logistics, it could be the shipper's fault, the carrier's fault, or the receiver's fault.

But the Carmack Amendment, a Congressional law passed in 1935, exists to make all our lives easier. It holds a great deal of weight regarding who is responsible for what when it comes to cargo loss. It clearly states that carriers hold the liability for freight, with a few exceptions.

It is helpful to know what these exceptions are when you file your claim.* A motor carrier can deny your claim for damage for the following reasons:

4 TYPES OF CARGO CLAIMS

- LOSS: Freight is picked up from an origin but never delivered to its destination.
- DAMAGE: Goods are discovered as damaged upon arrival at the destination and must be noted on the bill of lading. This type is the most common kind of freight claim.
- CONCEALED: This is the most challenging kind of claim to prove. You technically only have five days to file this type of claim. After that, it can be challenging to prove the damage didn't happen after receipt of the freight. Damage or loss is discovered 'after the fact' meaning after the delivery happens and the driver leaves. By doing a thorough inspection when the freight arrives, this type of claim can be avoided.
- SHORTAGE: When only a portion of the freight that is listed on the bill of lading arrives, you have a shortage. If it is well documented when discovered at the time of delivery, a claim should be quick and easy.

- **An Act of God**
- **The Public Enemy**
- **Act or Default of Shipper**
- **Public Authority** (the government)
- **The Inherent Vice or Nature of the Goods Transported**

*The Carmack Amendment does not apply to intrastate claims, only interstate claims.

CHECK OUT THE FULL DETAILS IN OUR:

FREIGHT CLAIM GUIDE

HOW TO SHIP FREIGHT

Prepare Your Shipment

Shipping Checklist

1. Inventory Your Shipment
2. Properly Package Your Shipment
3. Weigh & Measure Your Shipment
4. Get Bids or List
5. Choose a Provider
6. Get a Bill of Lading
7. Arrange Pick-Up
8. Track Your Shipment
9. Confirm Receipt and Delivery
10. Repeat

Inventory Your Shipment

The first step is to determine what exactly you are going to be putting into the shipment. This is usually a no-brainer because it will consist of goods that were ordered by a customer, inbound materials to your company, or simply items you need to get from point A to point B in your supply chain. The contents of your shipment must be listed on a Bill of Lading which will be covered soon.

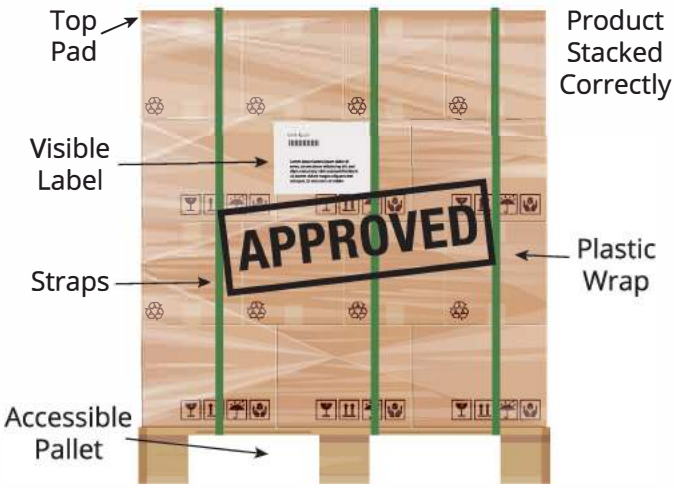
It is also recommended that you append a value to the goods for insurance reasons and document that value in the inventory, or at minimum, document it. Values can be market price, appraised value, or cos to replace valuations. Typically the insurance will specify which value is used.

Properly Package Your Shipment

Properly packaging your shipment relies on what exactly you are shipping, but the concept remains the same throughout. You want to follow these four guidelines:

1. Make it Dense and Compact
2. Make it Durable and Completely Protected
3. Consider Stow-ability
4. Make Sure it is Easily Handled

STACKED PALLET EXAMPLE



Make It Dense and Compact

Reducing the overall volume of the shipment is advantageous for numerous reasons. Bes of all, you can get better rates for many shipments with a higher freight density (lower freight class rating). The goal here is to increase the pounds per cubic foot (pcf) of the shipment to allow it to fall into a more preferable freight class.

Palletized shipments that are pyramided or loaded so that they cannot be sacked upon or take an inappropriate amount of space will likely result in higher charges.

Pallets that have boxes over-hanging can be easily damaged during loading and unloading processes.

Make it Durable and Completely Protected

LTL shipments will be transferred from trailer to trailer several times across a shipping dock. Shipments on pallets, or crated, will be handled with a forklift. Shipments will be exposed to 4 potential sources of damage. They are ...

1. Compressive Load
2. Shock / Impact
3. Vibration
4. Ambient Conditions

Compressive Load

This is a downward pressure from weight. Packaging must resist all static loads from the weight of the materials being shipped and any loads from shipments sacked on top of it. Avoid damage from compressive loads by using boxes and pallets that have a load bearing capacity considerably higher than your shipment requires, and follow bes practices for packing your shipment.

Shock

Also known as impact loading, this is any instantaneous force the packaging encounters during transport. This can be the trailer dropping off of a curb, or it can be a forklift swinging the load into an object. Avoid damage from shock by properly insulating goods in force dampening materials (foam, dunnage, etc.) and using edge guards.

Vibration

Vibratory loads are constantly in play while traveling down the road. They can greatly vary in frequency and strength. Avoid damage from vibration by properly isolating and dampening goods within their containers. Denser materials will transmit more vibratory force, so opt for a lower density foam or lower odometer rubber.

Note: Liquid containers should be either full or empty to maximize ability. A half-fled container subjects the packaging restraints to significantly higher forces because of the fluid slapping into the sides of the container. For large containers of fluid, consider internal bases or foam to limit this movement.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT PALLET

Wooden pallets come in various types. The most widely used wood pallet is the Grocery Manufacturers' Association, or GMA, pallet. It, along with 5 other models, are approved by the International Organization for Standardization, or ISO. These models are described in ISO Standard 6780.

Dimensions (Standard)	Dimensions (Metric)	Wasted Floor Space[1]	Common Usage
40.00" x 48.00"	1016 x 1219mm	3.7%	North America
39.37" x 47.24"	1000 x 1200mm	6.7%	Europe & Asia
45.90" x 45.90"	1165 x 1165mm	8.1%	Australia
42.00" x 42.00"	1067 x 1067mm	11.5%	Worldwide
43.30" x 43.30"	1100 x 1100mm	14.0%	Asia
31.50" x 47.24"	800 x 1200mm	15.2%	Europe

[1]Wasted floor space based on 20 pallets loaded in a 40 ft. ISO container.

Example GMA Wood Pallet with Dimensions

The key here is that the pallet easily accepts a set of forks from two directions.

Pallets also can be constructed of other materials. Plastic pallets that have openings for forks and trucks are also recommended for usage. These are more durable and easy to reuse. For heavier loads, a galvanized steel or aluminum pallet can be used. Metal pallets also are fireproof and extremely durable compared to traditional wood pallets which can save you money over time.

Weight of Pallets made of Various Materials

One thing to be aware of is the weight of particular pallets. This can add up considerably for larger volume loads.

PALLET SIZE (WxL)	MATERIAL	WEIGHT		
		1 PALLET	10 PALLETS	20 PALLETS
40" x 48"	**Recycled Wood**	40 Lbs. (18.2 Kgs)	400 Lbs. (182Kgs)	800 Lbs. (364Kgs)
40" x 48"	**Light Plastic**	14 Lbs. (6.4Kgs)	140 Lbs. (64Kgs)	280 Lbs. (128Kgs)
40" x 48"	**Aluminum**	48Lbs (21.8Kgs)	480 Lbs. (218Kgs)	960 Lbs. (436Kgs)
40" x 48"	**Galvinized Steel**	66 Lbs. (30Kgs)	660 Lbs. (300Kgs)	1320 Lbs. (600Kgs)

Ambient Conditions

On the road the temperatures and humidity in the trailer vary considerably. Common trailer conditions range from 0° F to 150° F and relative humidity as high as 100%. Sea freight is exposed to a corrosive saltwater environment which can corrode unprotected metal. Air freight in an unregulated cargo hold will experience a considerably lower pressure environment of around 8.0 PSI absolute along with cool temperatures around 30 - 40° F. The low pressure can cause containers to develop leaks and other non- standard issues with other modes.

Size and Weight of the Shipment

The limits on the size and weight of the shipment will be set by the carrier. They will set limits on per skid or pallet weight, total shipment weight, maximum dimensions, and more. Here's a range from some of our carriers.

Specification	Limit
Handling Units	Pallets, Crates, etc.
Pallet Weight	1,500 – 3,500 Lbs.
Total Shipment Weight	9,000 – 20,000 Lbs.
Unit Length	48"
Unit Width	48"
Unit Height	70 - 96"

Other carriers may be very specific in the types, weights, and units of freight that they will carry. It is wise to always check ahead to avoid fees and misunderstandings.

Proper Stacking and Placement of Boxes on a Pallet

Next, you want to make sure and properly place your goods onto the pallet. Improper stacking can greatly reduce the strength of the packaging and increase the chances of incurring damages.

The key is making sure everything is aligned. This is easy to achieve by stacking the boxes on top of each other in the same orientation.

Overlapping the boxes will reduce the compressive load bearing capacity of the underlying boxes by *up to 50%.* The boxes also should not extend past the edge of the pallet. Even extending half an inch outward will reduce the compressive load bearing capacity *by 33%* and increase the likelihood of damage.

Various Types and Strengths of Boxes

TEST RATING	PER PALLET WEIGHT[2]	Recommended Max Weight
32 ECT Lightweight Single Wall Corrugated	38 Lbs.	30 Lbs.
200# Single Wall Corrugated	42 Lbs.	40 Lbs.
275# Single Wall Corrugated	48 Lbs.	65 Lbs.
275# Double Wall Corrugated	72 Lbs.	80 Lbs.
500# Double Wall Corrugated	108 Lbs.	140 Lbs.

[2] Weight refers to (20) 20" x 20" x 12" boxes (1 Avg. Pallet Worth)

One thing to keep in mind when you order boxes is the weight of the boxes that will be stacked on top of it. This can add up very quick for the bottom boxes which can cause them to collapse or be crushed. In transit, the vehicle will hit bumps which will increase the peak amount of compression load on the boxes. As such you should opt for a good margin in box strength.

Additional Packaging Materials you should Use

Anti-Slip Mats: These are always useful to avoid items moving during transport. They can be placed between the pallet and the items being shipped.

Damage Indicators: These are very useful, especially, if your shipments or goods are susceptible to extreme temperatures and movement.

Edge Protectors: Protect the corners of your shipment. Edge protectors can also prevent straps from slicing into the boxes. Edge guards add another benefit helping prevent movement during transport.

Labels: Ensure all labels can be clearly identified for shipping purposes. Label the packages that have special handling requirements, such as, tilt sensitive or fragile items, clearly.

Pads: Consider using corrugated pads and putting them on the top and bottom of the goods. You want to prevent tie down straps from marking into the package and it gives another layer to protect your items. This certainly should be done if it's a stackable shipment.

Pallet Bands: These will help limit movement amongst the palletized goods. These are essentially giant rubber bands. Affordable, reusable.

Straps: Heavy items, like barrels or large auto parts, you need to tie down the load with straps. Straps can be either thin metal or heavy-duty plastic. They should be applied in a manner that covers all sides of the shipment.

Stretch Wrap: Most times you will want to completely wrap the palletized shipment using 60-ga, or better, stretch wrap. This will prevent shifting during transit and handling, as well a,s provide a barrier against moisture. Moisture can damage or corrode items in shipment, and can also degrade the structural integrity of the boxes.

Stow-ability

First, can your shipment be stacked? If it is not stackable, then mark **"Do Not Stack"** on the package using labels on *all four sides*. Notate to the carrier that it is not stackable. The carrier may decide to charge more for an un-stackable shipment.

If it can be stacked, you will want to make the top of the pallet as fat as possible. You'll also want to take the additional weight into consideration when packaging the shipments.

Ease of Handling

Following the above guidelines will give you an easy to handle shipment. However, for non-palletized freight, aka loose freight, that requires special handling you will likely incur additional fees and expense. It should also be noted that a shipment that is easy to handle is less likely to be damaged.

How to Weigh and Measure a Freight Shipment

Weight

Put the entire load on the scale as it is to be shipped. This includes the pallet, skids, wrap, straps, and everything else. It is important to know the exact weight of your shipment to avoid re-weigh surcharges, handling problems, and to determine your expected cost. Standard freight bids are priced per cwt, or per hundred weight.

Dimensions

Length: Measure the longest side of your package, rounding to the nearest inch.

Girth: Measure the width of your package and multiply by two. Add this to the height of your package multiplied by two. (2W + 2H = Girth)

Cubic Size: Length x Width x Height

How to Measure Your Shipment

L x H x W = Volume

Measure the Largest Dimension in either Axis

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROVIDER

Why use a 3PL?

Shippers have the option of working directly with specific carriers or choosing a 3PL. Selecting a 3PL can be difficult as there are a lot of options and variables to consider. The three reasons to use a top-tier 3PL: Cost, Convenience, Customer Service! 3PL's can work with tens of thousands of carriers to find the best rates and maintain those relationships to keep reliable carriers that will get your product delivered on-time and how you specify. They also take the pressure off of you and your company so you can focus on your actual product and less on the logistics of distribution. Couple with the expertise and technology a top 3PL possesses, and you can have more peace of mind and a healthier bottom line.

How to select the right 3PL?

With thousands of options in the U.S. alone, it's essential to do your homework and find the right partner. It's important to consider the following:

What services do you need?

What type of freight are you shipping? Do you need LTL, reefer, intermodal, and/or air shipping? Not all 3PL's offer all of these services. Using a 3PL with expertise in all modes will allow them to cross-utilize all options to always find the best routes and rates available, regardless of mode.

Where are you shipping to?

Does your product need to go across the country or possibly out of the country? Some 3PL's do not handle international or cross-border freight.

Do they have a proven track record?

Be sure to check a 3PL's credentials. Look for customer reviews, referrals, awards, certificates and certifications to ensure they are trustworthy and will get the job done right every time. A lot of this can be found right on their website.

HOW TO CHOOSE A PROVIDER - CONT'D

Are they able to scale with your growth?

Can the 3PL handle spikes in demand? This is critical in your company's ability to grow and handle more orders. The right 3PL should be flexible and able to adapt to your needs. See how they are structured and what type of team will be assigned to your account.

What are there on-time percentages?

What can you expect for your pick-ups and delivery? What can you expect if a dead line is missed? What type of communication and processes will be in place to always ensure smooth distribution?

What type of technology and tracking do they offer?

This could be one of the biggest differentiators. Do they offer a TMS (Transportation Management System) and does it offer real-time tracking for your shipments? More importantly, how many of their shipments do they currently track? You should be looking for **something over 90%!** The more robust platforms also offer real-time market intelligence on your lanes, freight optimization algorithms, alerts and reporting, digital invoices and much more.

Has the company won any awards?

A company that focuses more on brokering deals than building relationships will probably not win a lot of industry awards. Check their website for awards, both past and present.

What is the company's experience?

How long has the company been operating? Experience that has developed over time and as the industry has evolved can be invaluable. Some 3PL's are very focused on specific industries and some have experience across a wide array. Another good thing to check is the memberships and industry organizations they maintain.

IMPORTANT FACTOR
Insurance Explained

Basic Liability Insurance: This is the mandatory motor carrier insurance. It covers damages the truck causes to other people and their property, namely bodily injury and property damage.

Physical Damage Insurance: This type of policy also covers damage incurred to the truck during the accident, or from events such as falling rocks. It is a more comprehensive policy that covers fire, theft, and more.

Motor Truck Cargo Insurance: This is a policy that covers the cargo the truck is hauling. There are some limits on what is covered depending on the insurer. Examples being live animals, contraband, and property not under a bill of lading. Loss can be due to collision, fire, or it just happens to fall of the back of the truck. Covered amounts vary depending on the terms of the insurer but can be up to the entire shipment value and other risk expenses.

Carrier Liability Insurance: The FMCSA requires freight carriers to provide this cargo coverage, but this is just the base requirement. The carrier liability is limited to 10 cents per pound, which is not going to cover the majority of shipments. The total carrier liability cannot exceed the invoice value of your shipment.

If you feel the minimums are insufficient, you can look into purchasing a 3rd party policy. Choptank offers an optional cargo insurance policy for freight transported through our marketplace, and this policy would cover the shipped goods on the truck. There are some restrictions, so research any policy along the way to ensure you are covered.

Tips for Finding a Provider

Cost vs. Value: Sometimes the cheapest provider option is not always the best for your business. Compare the risks, service level, and the cost to arrive at the best value for your freight needs. Having a reliable company moving your freight counts for a lot. Less stress, less worry, and a reliable backbone. The last thing you want to do is save a few dollars but take on huge headaches and the pricing can change with the market or that initial “cheaper” price might go up over time while the service level remains the same!

Simplicity: How many moving pieces are needed to provide the level of support and service you need? Is this specific to the carrier or industry wide? If specific to the carrier, is the additional processing and handling risk tolerable given everything else? Remember, each time your shipment is handled is an opportunity for damage, routing errors, and incidentals, such as weather. Seek simplicity; short projected times with a carrier that has the leas amount of interlining possible. Lastly, check the company’s on-time delivery rate, which should be above 90%.

Risk Aversion: Research the providers driving records and claim rate. Combine those with the cost of sufficiently insuring the cargo. Include other risk factors such as delayed shipments, replacement cost of damaged goods, and other issues that not only can affect your bottom line, but also affect your company’s image and churn rates. "The truck driver fell asleep and plowed through a corn field" is not going to be a great solution to "Where’s my order? I needed it yesterday" A reliable company should have a claims-to-damage rate of 1.5% or lower.

Vetting: Look up the USDOT and MC numbers. Also verify insurance data and any necessary hazmat or special qualifications. The only exceptions to this rules are freight brokers or freight forwarders. A freight broker or forwarder will only have a MC number. You can look up any company’s credentials by DOT number, MC number, or company name. Do they have a positive reputation among fellow transport companies and previous customers? Any reputable freight hauler should be able to provide positive references from previous customers. You may also want to look up the company on the Better Business Bureau website to see if any complaints have been lodged against them.

Resources

International Maritime Organizations
US and International Maritime Resources
US FHWA Policy, Legislation, and Regulations US DOT Regulations
Freight Classification Assistance Commodity Classification Standards Board NMFC Packaging Resource

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Manage all of your logistics in one place. Discover a team of experts that offers solutions for all of your shipping problems. Choptank Transport is an award-winning third party logistics company with over 20 years of experience. Trusted by Fortune 500 companies and small businesses alike, our commitment to 24/7/365 customer service and reliability makes us a top choice in the industry. Our customized technology, superior communications skills, constant visibility and proven track record should put us first on your list.

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