A QUALITY START

We do everything in our power to make sure your shipment reaches its destination on time, on target, and intact. There are, however, a few steps you can take to protect your freight even before it enters our care. From using the right labels to proper crating, this guide outlines all the ways you can give your shipment a quality start from the very beginning.

PLEASE NOTE: The shipper’s responsibility for proper packaging, labeling and shipping documentation related specifically to its product is outlined in the National Motor Freight Classification and the Hazardous Materials Regulations of the Department of Transportation.

Communicate Clearly
Shippers should communicate clearly to the carrier how freight should be handled. Follow these guidelines as an added precaution to ensure your cargo arrives on target, on time, and intact.

Proper Labeling
Clearly label every piece of your shipment to allow for quick identification and minimal handling, which, in turn, leads to damage-free shipments.

- Remove or mark over old shipping labels.
- Label both individual boxes and pallets in the event that the pieces become separated in transit.
- Freight labels should always match the bill of lading and clearly show one consignee address.
- Any special handling requirements must be clearly marked with a pictorial label and/or notation.
- “Top Heavy,” “Fragile,” “To Order” or “COD” must be properly marked when applicable.

Hazmat/Precautionary Labeling
Hazmat and precautionary labels indicating special handling or storage requirements must be marked on the outside package on two adjacent panels at a minimum.

Warning labels should always go on the outside of cartons. Shipping indicators (like shock-watch or tilt-watch meters), however, should always be mounted inside cartons with void space to avoid false readings.
**Crating**

Strengthening shipping crates isn’t just about using more lumber. **It’s about using lumber wisely**. Lumber must be reasonably sound and free from cross grains and knots.

- **GOOD**
  Vertical supports increase crate strength 1.2 times.

- **BETTER**
  Just one diagonal board on each side of a crate makes it six times stronger.

- **BEST**
  Two diagonal boards on every side make a crate nearly 12 times stronger.

Contents must be securely held within crates to prevent any movement of product inside the crate. The use of inner packing materials allows adequate product protection.

**Interlocking Corners**

When attaching reinforcement boards to a crate, **always use three-way interlocking corners**. Also, be sure to **nail or staple into the side grain** instead of the end grain.

**Pallets, Platforms or Skids**

- **Standard stringer pallets** measure 40 x 48 inches and have a loading capacity of around 2,800 pounds.
- **Pallets should be covered** with good deck boards of sufficient dimension, strength and spacing.
- **Designed to provide safe movement** with mechanical equipment and protection of product's undercarriage.
- **True** four-way access.
- **Free** from any protruding nails.
- **Maximum height** of 84 inches pallet to product.
- **Product must be secured** to skids with bolts, wrap, banding, etc.
- **Avoid** using corrugated pallets.
Wrapping Skids
When wrapping skids with stretch wrap...

• Use only pallets that are in good condition.
• Use top caps to protect the tops of freight and keep skids secure.
• Consider adding corner boards to keep stacked cartons aligned and secure.
• Tuck the lead wrap between the pallet and the bottom box.
• Wrap around the boxes in an upward direction, overlapping each strip of film by at least 50%.
• Twist stretch wrap every other time around to increase wrap strength.
• At the top, stretch the film diagonally over the top corners with a three-inch overlap, then spiral back to the bottom.
• To ensure a product is secured to a pallet, finish with a three-inch overlap of the pallet base with several layers of wrap.
• For additional strength and securement, use metal, plastic or nylon banding in all four directions.

Palletizing Cardboard Cartons
Improper stacking and storage can weaken cardboard cartons by up to 60%. Keep your cartons strong by following a few simple tips.

DON'T STACK IN AN INTERLOCKED PATTERN
Alternating cartons can reduce their strength by up to 50%.

KEEP CARTONS ALIGNED
Even the slightest misalignment can reduce carton strength by up to one-third.

DON'T ALLOW OVERHANG
Besides making them vulnerable to damage, allowing bottom cartons to hang over the edge of the pallet reduces their strength by one-third.

DON'T STORE CARTONS FOR LONG PERIODS OF TIME
Cartons are not meant for long-term storage. Just six months of sitting can reduce their strength by up to 50%.

NEVER STORE CARTONS IN HIGH HUMIDITY
A 90% relative humidity reading can cause a carton to lose 60% of its ability to handle a top-to-bottom load. A 20% temperature change can also reduce strength.

Palletizing Bags
The best way to protect bags from being punctured is with a solid bottom cushion (like a corrugated pad or tray). You can also keep bags from shifting during transit by using the interlocking stacking method. Keep all bags inside the pallet perimeter and use cardboard to protect the bags from any incidental contact. Ensure bags do not overhang the skid and top weight does not burst or collapse the bottom freight.
Top-Heavy Articles
If your shipment exhibits a high center of gravity, it must be placarded on two opposite sides with the “Top Heavy” precautionary warning labels. Articles should be secured and fastened to skids of wider bases to prevent tipping and provide safer handling.

Additional Packaging Consideration
Not all shipments fit neatly into a pallet. Special circumstances call for special packing attention. Make sure to cover all finished surfaces with adequate materials and strength. Packing should protect from punctures and abrasions, compression or crushing, shock and vibration, shifting, and environmental exposures.

Specialty Items

BUNDLES
The best way to ship pipes and other long objects is to bundle them into crates. Besides keeping your items safe, crating also allows bundles to be double stacked and properly handled by our equipment. Uncrated bundles should be secured with metal bands and nylon chokers.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Never band long items to a pallet. This is especially risky because there is no blocking on the ends to stop side-to-side shifting.

DRUMS/PAILS
Even if you’re shipping only one drum or pail, it should be supported by a solid-bottom pallet. Always place cardboard between the drum and the pallet to prevent drum fatigue. Never stack drums or pails more than two high.

FURNITURE
Furniture is especially vulnerable to damage. Make sure furniture is carefully packaged. Make sure all finished surfaces and upholstered parts are protected with adequate padding material.

REELS
Always anchor reels to a pallet with blocking and bracing. This makes them easier to forklift and eliminates rolling and shifting during transit. Product cut to specified lengths must be noted and protected.

ROLLS
Rolls should have an inner packaging core to allow mechanical poles to be inserted in the middle core to move safely. Product should be protected with wrap of adequate strength.

**PLEASE NOTE:** Interior packing is required to afford adequate protection against damage within a container and must reasonably occupy full cubic capacity of outer shipping container.

QUESTIONS? Our loss prevention team is simply a click away at LossPrevention@AverittExpress.com or visit AverittExpress.com for more helpful information.