
Appendix I

Freight Handling: Preparing the Goods for Shipment

Everyone involved in the distribution channel, from exporter to carrier to end user, has a responsibility to ensure that goods are properly prepared, packaged and identified for shipment. Two objectives should be borne in mind:

- achieving safe delivery of the total shipment; or,
- in the event that damage occurs, minimizing the monetary loss.

Responsibilities

At the initial stages of transport, the onus is on you, the exporter, to ensure that goods are properly packaged, unitized, and/or containerized. Otherwise, carriers could refuse to handle the goods and any claim for recovery would be jeopardized.

1. General Guidelines

A few basic rules:

- assess the total transportation movement and pack for the toughest leg;
- determine the frequency of trans-shipment in a multimodal movement and prepare the goods for multiple handling;
- determine packaging regulations and requirements applicable in the country of origin, for each carrier, at all ports of exit and entry, and in the country of destination;
- know packaging capabilities: strengths and weaknesses, "stackability" and handling, susceptibility to weather;
- package goods to minimize internal movement and to protect corners, edges, finishes, valves, dials and knobs, or upholstery and material;

- use appropriate unitizing devices (i.e., pallets, containers, etc.) and place, load and secure goods properly;
- determine the kind of handling equipment to be used and its availability at trans-shipment points.

2. Compliance with Modal Rules

Of all transport modes, the railways in particular have established rules for size, construction and strength of most packages to be used. When these rules are not complied with, a penalty freight charge can be assessed and claim recovery could be jeopardized.

Other modes vary in the application of such strict rules, but all require that goods must be properly packaged to reasonably withstand handling and transport.

3. Equipment Inspection

Before loading goods, you should inspect the transport equipment, whether it is a truck trailer, a rail car, or a container. If the transport equipment has not been properly inspected before loading, your claim for recovery of any damages may be jeopardized.

You should check the following points:

a. External

- equipment must not have any obvious holes or tears in the outside panelling;
- doors should be in good order; watch carefully that gaskets, door hinges and locks are not broken or twisted;
- before packing open-top or open-ended equipment, ensure that the canvas tilts are complete and not ripped; customs seal ropes should be in position and fit correctly, with end pieces intact;
- soft-topped equipment should have all roof-bows or supports in the right places;
- any labels remaining on the outside of the equipment which refer to the previous cargo should be removed to avoid misunderstandings and penalties;