

## The Value in Packaging

*Using the best packaging equipment in your warehouse can make your business more reliable and increase customer satisfaction*

---



It happens to most of us at one point in our consumer lives. You order a product that requires delivery and it has been damaged by the time you receive it. There are a number of reasons why a product may become damaged along route. The courier could well have mishandled the product, or perhaps the package was kept in an inappropriate storage area. Whatever the excuse may be, the main cause often comes down to the fact that the packaging for the product was simply not suitable to resist potential harm. Poor product packaging can therefore easily result in dissatisfied customers.



Through the warehousing services you provide you have a responsibility to ensure that goods making their way through the supply chain via your company are handled appropriately. The last thing you want is for your clients to blame you for complaints they have received from customers. This includes everything from proper care of products within the fulfilment house to ensuring the ordered products leave the warehouse in the most suitable shipping format.

There are specific matters to investigate when deciding how to package goods. This article will discuss the packaging considerations that should be made to best satisfy your clients and their respective customers. If your business provides sufficient protection for ordered goods then there is reduced risk when it comes to delivery.

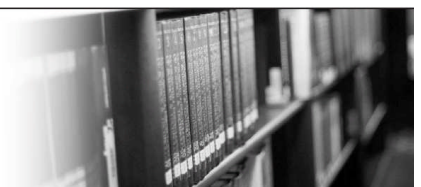


### Packaging Design

Whether your fulfilment house is shipping a small product like a DVD or a large piece of furniture such as a bed, you need to ensure you have the range of appropriate tools and equipment required for customers to receive their orders in the best possible condition. Whether the product requires an envelope, box, or some other unique container, your fulfilment house should be supplied with the right equipment to best package it.

With regards to design the chief concern is whether or not your packaging supplies will offer the necessary protection for the goods to be shipped. Is the product small and relatively sturdy requiring simply an envelope or box? Or is the product large or more fragile and requiring more complex packaging? You must guarantee you cover all of the necessary options to package the goods so damage during shipment is limited.

Another decision you and your clients should be making is whether to use packaging supplies that are environmentally friendly. Using material that is easily recyclable or reusable is an important global issue and has become an important statement for brands. With global warming an everyday concern it has become essential that companies play their role in reducing waste. One of the best ways to accomplish this is by researching the most environmentally friendly packaging available.



## Test Conditions

Whatever the product it is wise to ensure it can withstand harsh shipment conditions. While some items being picked from the warehouse may only be travelling a short distance, others may have thousands of miles to go. During longer journeys there is increasing potential for shipments to encounter damaging environments. Products need to be packaged adequately so that they arrive to their destination in one piece no matter what the journey entails.

There are numerous services available that will conduct tests to determine the best supplies and equipment to handle your shipments. Dependant on the size, weight, and overall nature of the product, an assortment of tests can be conducted to determine which packaging would best suit your needs. Some of these tests include the following:

- Water Spray and Absorption Tests – Packaging samples can be soaked for a fixed period of time to determine which would absorb the least amount of water.
- Drop Tests – Packaging samples can be dropped from a fixed height in different orientations to establish which can best survive the drop.
- Compression and Stacking Tests – Package samples can be loaded with a loading box carrying a substantial weight to determine whether or not it can withstand the weight it may be forced to carry in storage areas. Depending on the nature of the product, tests can also be conducted to determine whether or not the package is even capable of being stacked.
- Vibration Tests – Vibrations can be simulated in a laboratory that will swing sample packages in any direction to emulate transportation being used.<sup>i</sup>

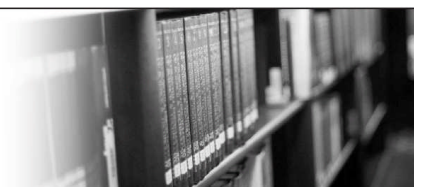
It can be beneficial to utilise one of these testing services or to even conduct some tests of your own inhouse to determine the best way to minimise shipment damage.

## Manage Warehouse Staff

Ensuring employees within the fulfilment house are consistently working to a high standard of packaging orders will significantly affect whether packages received by customers remain intact. Employees who are careless in their work or untrained could end up packaging picked warehouse goods incorrectly, ultimately resulting in the products being damaged en route to their destination.

Motivating warehouse employees to perform to certain standards is essential, particularly those performing the repetitive work that is carried out within a warehouse.

Proper training and supervision is therefore key to ensuring picked warehouse goods are being packaged properly. Showing interest in your warehouse staff will ultimately encourage them that the work they are doing is vital to the business and the overall client supply chain.



➤ In Conclusion

Customers have high expectations regarding the way they receive ordered goods. They are putting their hard earned money into paying for a product (and in most cases high delivery charges) so they expect to receive their order in the same condition they would have had they purchased it in a bricks and mortar shop.

In order to ensure your packaging is sufficient enough for goods to be delivered without damage you must carefully consider the design of the equipment to be used. You need to ensure you are using the best quality, most durable, and most environmentally friendly equipment possible. One way to determine whether or not your packaging will be adequate enough to deliver goods from your warehouse would be to conduct a series of tests, either on your own or through a subcontracted company. Keeping an eye on employees and ensuring they are properly trained and supervised will also be essential in ensuring no errors occur during the packaging stage of the supply chain.

Your warehouse can create value through the packaging it uses to ship goods. The more you can assure clients that customers will receive their goods intact the more reliable your fulfilment services will be.

---

<sup>i</sup> "Packaging Material Testing Standards." *NEFAB*. 2008. 1 August 2008.  
<[http://www.nefab.com/Packaging\\_Material\\_Testing.aspx](http://www.nefab.com/Packaging_Material_Testing.aspx)>

