



A CUSTOMER GUIDE TO LTL FREIGHT

The Shipping Guide

How your freight moves, how it's classified, and how we keep it safe — from pickup to delivery.



**LOGISTICS
MADE
EASY**

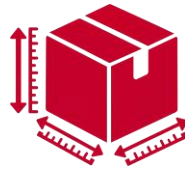
What's inside this guide



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The Life of a Shipment

The journey your freight takes from the moment you book a pickup to a signed delivery receipt.



02

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How we vet carriers, verify insurance, track your shipment and stand behind every claim.

The life of a shipment

There is a lot more to LTL shipping than pickup and delivery. Here is the full journey, condensed into six stages.

1

Book the pickup

You request a pickup online or by phone. The request routes automatically to the dispatch board at your local terminal.

2

Dispatch & assign

A dispatcher sees real-time driver availability, assigns a city driver, and sends route data to the in-cab GPS.

3

Pickup & inspection

The city driver collects your freight against the Bill of Lading and verifies packaging matches the paperwork.

4

Cross-dock

At the terminal, the dock crew moves freight onto trailers bound for the destination terminal in a cross-docking process.

5

Linehaul

Linehaul drivers run to destination terminals, with most shipments routing through larger breakbulk hubs for consolidation.

6

Final delivery

The destination dock crew loads a city delivery trailer, and the driver obtains a signed receipt and confirms delivery electronically.

Freight classification, explained

What is NMFC®?

The National Motor Freight Classification® is the industry standard that compares commodities moving in interstate, intrastate and foreign commerce. It gives carriers and shippers one uniform basis for negotiated rates.

18 classes, 50 to 500

Class 50 is the lowest and class 500 the highest. The higher the class, the higher the rate per hundred pounds. Because NMFC® product descriptions change over time, confirm the correct number to avoid miscalculated rates on the bill of lading.

CALCULATING DENSITY

Total weight ÷ total cubic feet

Measure and weigh the whole shipment, pallets and packaging included.

The four characteristics behind every class

Density

Weight relative to the space the shipment occupies, including pallets and packaging.

Handling

How easily the freight can be moved, given its shape, fragility and packaging.

Stowability

How well it loads alongside other freight, including hazardous or oversized items.

Liability

Risk of damage, theft or harm to surrounding freight, and the value at stake.

NMFC® and National Motor Freight Classification® are registered marks of the NMFTA.

Freight class in 3 simple steps

Since July 19, 2025 (NMFC Docket 2025-1), most freight is classed by **density alone**: measure it, weigh it, divide, then look it up.

1

Measure it

Length × width × height in inches, pallet included. Divide by 1,728 to get cubic feet.

2

Weigh it

Total pounds for the whole shipment, pallet and packaging included.

3

Divide & look it up

Pounds ÷ cubic feet = density (lb/ft³). Find that number in the chart to get your class.

QUICK EXAMPLE

48" × 40" × 48" pallet, 600 lbs = Class 92.5

$92,160 \div 1,728 = 53.3 \text{ cu ft} \rightarrow 600 \div 53.3 = 11.25 \text{ lb/ft}^3$

The density chart (13 tiers)

Density (lb/ft ³)	Class	Std. pallet* weighs
Less than 1	400	under 53 lbs
1 to under 2	300	53–107 lbs
2 to under 4	250	107–213 lbs
4 to under 6	175	213–320 lbs
6 to under 8	125	320–427 lbs
8 to under 10	100	427–533 lbs
10 to under 12	92.5	533–640 lbs
12 to under 15	85	640–800 lbs
15 to under 22.5	70	800–1,200 lbs
22.5 to under 30	65	1,200–1,600 lbs
30 to under 35	60	1,600–1,867 lbs
35 to under 50	55	1,867–2,667 lbs
50 or more	50	2,667+ lbs

*Standard 48" × 40" × 48" pallet. Lower class = lower rate. Fragile, hazmat, high-value or non-stackable freight can still class differently — ask your rep.

Why packaging matters

In LTL, your freight travels through a network of docks, terminals and trailers, and is sometimes handled more than once. Packaging is where you have the most control.

Common hazards of distribution

- Packages shifting on the pallet when they are not properly secured.
- Compression from the wrong packaging, a poor stack pattern, excessive void space or excessive weight.
- Shock and vibration from the normal rigors of over-the-road transportation.
- High and low humidity, which can weaken corrugated boxes by as much as 60% and cut stacking strength.
- Temperature extremes — trailers for general commodities are not climate-controlled.
- Environmental exposure to dirt, dust and other contaminants.

What we do to protect your shipment

In our trailers

Cargo straps secure freight from movement, logistics posts prevent double-stacking, air bags fill side-to-side gaps, and dunnage adds protection.

On the road

We hire for safety, put every driver through extensive training with a large trainer staff, and hold weekly pre-shift meetings for dock and driver teams.

At the terminal

Dockworkers scan every shipment on tablets that surface your handling instructions, and supervisors inspect and photograph every trailer at midpoint and closing.

Boxes or crates?

Size and weight usually decide the container. Crates suit large single items that need extra stability; the NMFC sets the limits for both.

Boxes

Corrugated fiberboard box	Max weight	Max outside dimensions
Singlewall	120 lbs	105"
Doublewall	180 lbs	120"
Triplewall	300 lbs	125"

Maximum outside dimension is length, width and depth added together. All boxes must comply with NMFC Item 222 and bear a legible box manufacturer's certificate on the outside surface.

Inner packaging

Inner packaging matters as much as the outer container. Use protective forms or fill wherever the commodity needs it: bubble wrap, corner guards and posts, foam cushioning, honeycomb, loose fill, paper pads, air pillows, Styrofoam peanuts, plastic bags, and form-fitting Styrofoam or fiberboard.

Crates

Use a crate when the item exceeds 300 lbs or will not fit within the maximum allowable size in the NMFC. Above 500 lbs, a standard wooden crate is required. Wooden crates must be built as follows:

- 1 Lumber is seasoned, reasonably sound and free from cross grain and from knots that would interfere with nailing or exceed one third the lumber's width.
- 2 An outer framework of upright and horizontal members, with added diagonal, upright and horizontal members wherever strength and rigidity require them.
- 3 Three-way locking corners, with members joined by nails, bolts or screws driven into the side grain of the joining members.

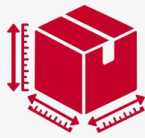
Pallets, stacking and wrapping

How freight sits on the pallet — and how tightly it is wrapped — decides whether it arrives intact.



Pallets and skids

- Decks, stringers and blocks must support a double-tiered load and prevent forklift damage underneath.
- Forklifts need access from all directions; if it is limited, say so in the packaging graphics.
- Build with no overhang; pallets over six feet must support the freight's full length.



Column or interlock

- Column stacking is strongest — a box's vertical corners carry about two thirds of its compression strength.
- Interlocking adds stability but can destroy up to 50% of compression strength.
- Stack boxes flap side up so the corrugation carries the weight above it.



Stretch wrapping

- Anchor the film at a corner, add corner boards, and wrap the base three or more times.
- Work upward overlapping each layer 50%, layer the top so film pulls down, then work back down.
- Finish with two more wraps at the pallet base, then press the cut end firmly to the load.

REMEMBER Never let cartons overhang the pallet edge — it cuts compression strength by up to 40% and exposes them to impact damage in normal handling.

What a good pallet looks like

Build every pallet so it looks like the one on the left. Square, flush to the deck and wrapped tight.



DO THIS

- Boxes column-stacked square, corner over corner
- Load flush with the pallet edges, no overhang
- Wrap taken in tight layers down onto the deck
- Labels facing outward and easy to scan



AVOID THIS

- Mismatched boxes stacked unevenly and leaning
- Cartons hanging past the deck, crushed at the corners
- Loose wrap that never reaches the pallet boards
- Labels buried under film or facing inward

Clear, secure labeling

Labels route your freight and tell our team how to handle it. Dockworkers move hundreds of pallets a shift, so remove or fully mark out old shipping and PRO number labels.

Fragile — handle with care

For packages containing articles such as glass or earthenware.

Directional arrows

To indicate that a specific orientation must be maintained in transit.

Top heavy

For articles with a high center of gravity in their normal orientation.

Protect from freezing

For freight that must be protected from freezing in winter months.

Common precautionary markings — see NMFC Items 580 and 682 for full detail

Label every piece

Every palletized or skidded unit, bundle and loose piece needs the shipper and consignee name and address, plus any special handling or precautionary markings.

Make it legible

Use waterproof ink or paint that contrasts with the product. Boxes printed with advertising must leave a clear, contrasting area of at least ten square inches.

Attach it securely

Lost labels are the most common cause of lost freight. Attach labels with glue or an equally good adhesive or metal straps; tags must be cloth, leather, metal or tagboard.

Loading and securing your freight

Every shipment is handled to one standard, so it arrives the way it left. These are the steps our dock teams follow on every load.



Checking identification

- Packaging is double-checked for shipper and consignee labels before loading.
- Shipments of up to 10 pieces are verified so the pro number appears on every package.
- Once the label is visible and the pro number confirmed, freight is scanned and ready to load.



Securing the load

- Logistic bars separate shipments so freight is never loaded directly on top of another.
- Horseshoe straps are applied to freight that is top-heavy, tall, shifts easily, contains liquids, or sits in the rear.
- Air bags fill any gap of six inches or more to prevent damage as the trailer moves.



Further precautions

- Pails, drums and cylinders are strapped to the wall to prevent spills.
- Food and poison are always loaded separately, with poison loaded last and placed at the rear.
- Gaylord boxes ride on the floor and are never double-stacked; bags are shrouded for protection.

How we protect your freight

As your broker, we don't drive the truck — we choose who does. These are the standards behind every carrier we put on your freight.

Carrier vetting

Every carrier is checked for active operating authority, safety scores and performance history before it ever touches your load.

Insurance verified

Cargo and liability coverage is confirmed directly with the insurer and re-checked so no load moves on an expired certificate.

Right carrier, right freight

Equipment type, lane experience and commodity history are matched to your shipment instead of whoever is simply cheapest.

Tracking and updates

Shipments are monitored from pickup to delivery, and you hear from us when something changes — before you have to ask.

One point of contact

A dedicated rep owns your account end to end, so questions and exceptions are handled without call-center handoffs.

Claims support

If something goes wrong, we file the claim, push the carrier and stay on it until your claim is resolved.



YOUR FREIGHT IS IN GOOD HANDS

Let's move it together.

No matter what you're shipping, every step in this guide is built around one outcome — freight that arrives complete, on time and claims-free.



Talk to your account executive

For classification questions, density checks and rate guidance on your commodities.

Use the density calculator

Enter dimensions in inches and the weight, and the shipment density is calculated for you.

Schedule a pickup

Book online or by phone, and your request routes straight to your local terminal's dispatch board.

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