

Taking the Fright Out of Freight

Best Practices to Avoid Hiccups
in Your Trade Show Shipping

Shipping your trade show or event freight can be quite daunting with all the paperwork that needs to be filled out, the time-definite deadlines, and everything that goes into setting up your booth. Don't let the intricacies scare you. We've compiled a checklist below to ensure your events are successful!

Know Your Packages

- Know the difference between a pallet, a crate, and loose pieces. These terms make a **big** difference to the carrier when picking up your freight.
- Have accurate dimensions and weight for the goods after they're fully packed. This ensures accuracy when it comes to transportation costs and handling fees.
- Know the **exact** pieces that are in your shipment. You should be able to quickly determine if there are any shortages at your booth.

Mark Everything Clearly

- Ensure that *at least* **four sides** of your freight have accurate labels and are securely attached.
- Always remove old labels. This seems like a no-brainer, but it is a source of one of the most common errors and creates issues with the delivery location.
- Communicate changes with your freight forwarder or carrier as soon as possible. Changes can include a different pickup or delivery date, changes to the freight itself, whether a liftgate is required—really, anything the forwarder or carrier must know before picking up or delivering your freight.

Choose an Experienced Forwarder or Carrier

- Freight forwarders and carriers that specialize in serving trade shows know the process and typically have a relationship with the facility where they will be delivering. One unique aspect of trade show delivery is that drivers have to check in at a different location than the final delivery point (this is known as the “marshaling yard”).
- At trade shows (especially convention centers), drivers are required to wait for their turn to deliver their freight. This can often take hours. Carriers who are not familiar with trade show delivery will often leave because they are afraid waiting will jeopardize their other deliveries and pickups for the day, which means your freight could be left undelivered or unattended.



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Prepare for Shipping

- ❑ When hundreds of deliveries or pickups occur simultaneously at one venue, the margin for human error increases tremendously. Be sure the trade show decorator knows precisely what materials are expected for your booth. With this extra layer of communication, it's easier to sort through the chaos when issues can occur.
- ❑ Make sure you know whether you're shipping to the advance warehouse or direct to the show site, as determined by the delivery dates. Check the material handling fees at each location, as they vary by show. It *may* be more cost-effective to go to one versus the other.
- ❑ Have your freight ready to ship the day before pickup. Most carriers pick up during business hours. If they show up at 8 AM and you haven't packed your freight, you may be subject to an "attempted pickup" fee.

Send Your Freight Back

- ❑ Ensure the outbound paperwork refers **precisely** to the freight your carrier will be picking up.
- ❑ Check everything twice. Any mistakes in the delivery destination, booth numbers, exhibitor name, or freight count could mean the driver doesn't have permission to pick up your freight.

DON'T FORGET...

- ! You **must** turn in post-show paperwork! If you do not, your freight may be re-routed via the carrier of the decorator's choice, and you will be contractually on the hook.
- ! Always, always, **always** purchase proper cargo insurance! Anything can happen during pick up, delivery, or in-transit. It's better to be safe than sorry.
- ! Develop a **Plan B** in the rare instance your shipment is lost in-transit and misses the show. It's better to have a downsized booth than nothing in the space at all.

Learn more about how ICAT Logistics can handle all your trade show and event freight by visiting our website at www.icatlogistics.com.