

# SMALL PACKAGE SHIPPING RATES: HOW SIZE AND WEIGHT AFFECT PRICE



Small package shipments come with a large list of terms, conditions, rules and calculations that are important to understand if you manage your company's business shipping.

The weight and dimensions of your small package express, ground and international shipments can have major impacts on your final UPS® shipping rates. **Read on to learn how to get the best rates for your business shipping.**

## BREAKING DOWN THE BASICS

First things first! Before you begin shipping, it's important to make sure you understand the terminology surrounding small package weight and size measurements.



**Actual weight:** How much your package actually weighs, including its packaging.



**Dimensional weight:** A pricing technique used to determine your package's density, or the amount of space it occupies in relation to its actual weight.



**Billable weight:** The weight used to calculate your final shipping rate (the greater of your package's dimensional or actual weight).



**Cubic inches:** This measurement is used when calculating dimensional weight, and can be determined by multiplying your shipment's length, width and height in inches, rounding up to the nearest whole number.



**Girth:** This measurement is used to determine if your package meets the carrier's size restrictions or if it is subject to additional fees based on its weight and height. You can calculate your shipment's girth using this formula:  $[(2 \times \text{width}) + (2 \times \text{height})]$ .

# DIMENSIONAL WEIGHT

If you're not careful, dimensional weight (also known as DIM or volumetric weight) can contribute to unexpected fees on your final shipping bill.

## What is dimensional weight?

Dimensional weight refers to your package's density, or the amount of space it occupies in relation to its actual weight. When calculating your shipment's billable weight, a carrier will use the greater of its dimensional or actual weight. By encouraging shippers to optimize their packaging processes for optimum density, carriers are able to increase the number of packages that can fit on a delivery truck — leading to reductions in fuel use, vehicle emissions and transportation costs.

## How do I calculate dimensional weight?

To determine a package's dimensional weight, you must multiply its length, width and height before dividing by a specified number. You can visit the [UPS](#) and [FedEx](#) websites to learn more about their specific requirements for calculating dimensional weight.

## How can I lower my shipment's dimensional weight?

**State the accurate weight.** Be sure to always enter the accurate weight and dimensions of your shipment, rather than making an estimate. Otherwise, the carrier has the right to audit your shipment, verify the weight and dimensions and make the appropriate adjustments to your shipping charges.

**Consolidate when possible.** When sending multiple items to the same destination, opt to send everything in one properly-sized box. This will help limit your shipping costs.

**Avoid over-packaging.** Shipping air is expensive! Efficient shipment packaging directly correlates to lower transportation costs. Take advantage of your space by using the smallest box possible and taking into account how much protective filling (if any) is necessary.

**Work with a 3PL.** An experienced third-party logistics (3PL) provider can analyze your business's unique shipping requirements and provide recommendations on best practices.



# WEIGHT AND SIZE RESTRICTIONS

Dimensional weight isn't the only reason to accurately state your shipment's dimensions and weight — it also helps you anticipate (or even avoid) additional charges related to the carrier's weight and size limits.

## Maximum weight and size

Many carriers have maximum weight and size limitations. Packages found in their systems that exceed these restrictions are technically unauthorized for transport and may be refused or returned to the shipper. In some cases, the package may be accepted and delivered, but it will still be subject to additional charges. If your package exceeds the carrier's maximum weight or size limits, it may be time to consider using a **freight service** for your shipments.

## Large or oversized packages

It's important to note that, even if your package doesn't exceed the carrier's maximum weight and size limits, it may still be subject to a Large or Oversized Package Surcharge if it exceeds certain measurements (generally when length plus girth exceed 130-150 inches) or weight thresholds.

## Irregular or heavy packages

Any shipment that requires special handling, such as an irregular or heavy package, could also incur an Additional Handling Fee. This fee can also be applied to shipments encased in non-standard packaging, if the packaging could cause issues with the carrier's sorting machines.



Be sure to check the carrier's specific guidelines for weight and size restrictions and additional fees. Both **UPS** and **FedEx** list their complete guidelines online.

## How do I remember weight and size limitations?

By entering the accurate weight and dimensions of your package into a transportation management system (TMS) like Unishippers **Express Manager™**, you can easily detect whether your shipment exceeds the carrier's weight and size limits, or if it will incur any additional fees. This way you can know of any additional costs in your quote upfront.



## **SHIP SMARTER WITH UNISHIPPERS**

Seemingly small steps like using accurate shipment measurements, evaluating your packaging and analyzing your company's shipping processes could end up saving you headaches and surprises on your final bill.

If you are unsure what impact your shipment's dimensions have on your shipping costs, contact Unishippers for a free shipping assessment.

Simple changes can often result in big savings!

**[UNISHIPPERS.COM](https://www.unishippers.com)**