

Your Guide to Small Package Holiday Shipping



The holidays aren't just the happiest time of the year — for small and mid-sized business (SMB) shippers, they're also one of the busiest! Luckily, by planning ahead for the shipping rush, your business (and your customers) can enjoy a cheerful, low-stress holiday season.

Read on as Unishippers outlines everything you need to know to prepare a successful holiday shipping game plan.



PROPERLY PREP YOUR PACKAGES

When scrambling to get packages out the door this holiday season, it's important to still take the time to properly prep your shipments. While taking shortcuts may get your small package shipments out the door faster, cutting corners may end up costing you more time and money in the long run.

Follow these simple (yet often overlooked) steps to ensure your holiday packages arrive on time and without damage:



Pack appropriately

When preparing your shipments, it's important to use the right packaging — you'll need a strong, new box designed to hold the weight of your shipment and adequate cushioning material to go inside. Make sure you also reinforce the opening and seams of your box with 2-inch-wide packing tape.



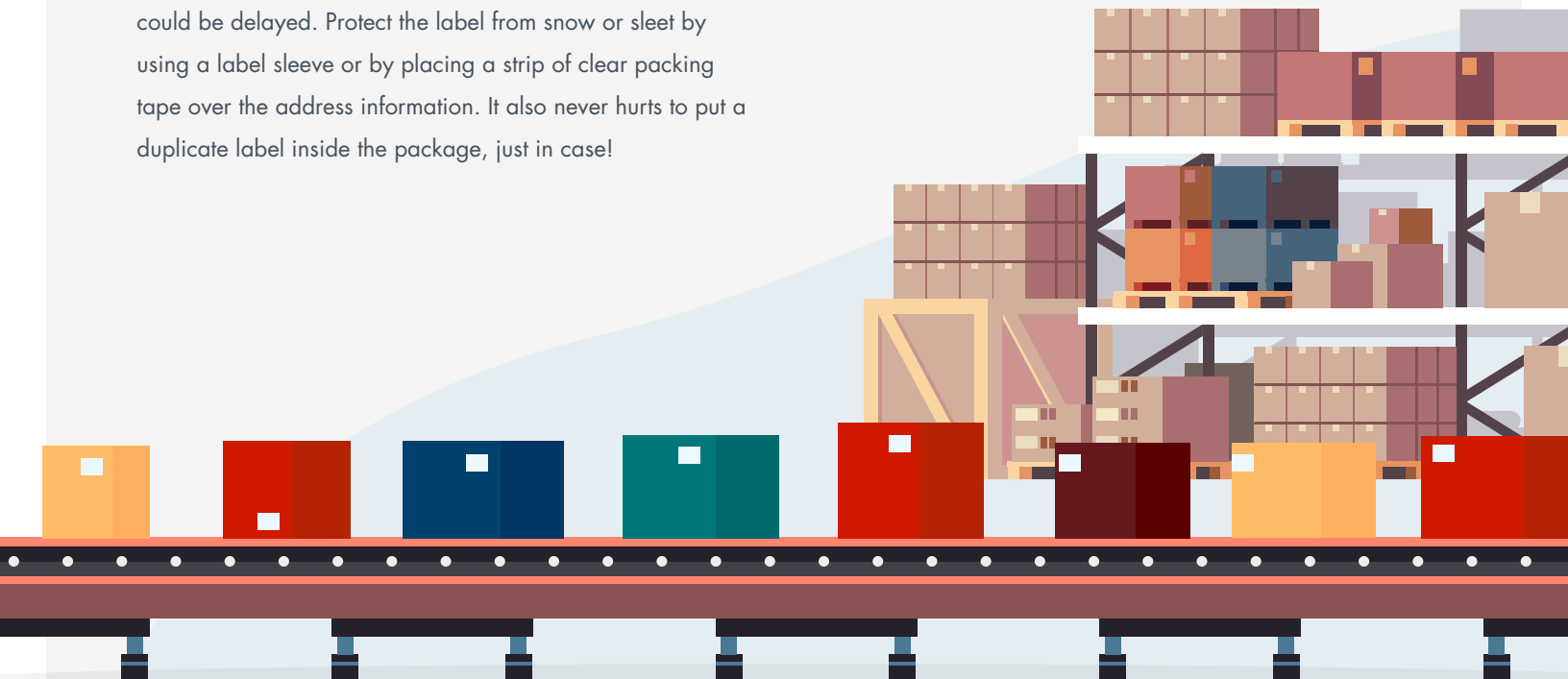
Protect shipping labels

If your shipping label is damaged in transit, your shipment could be delayed. Protect the label from snow or sleet by using a label sleeve or by placing a strip of clear packing tape over the address information. It also never hurts to put a duplicate label inside the package, just in case!



Forgo the pretty string

While it may add an extra merry touch to your packages, do not use items like twine or string that could get caught on the conveyor belts used to sort and ship packages. These types of materials could seriously damage your shipment and result in unexpected costs.



PLAN FOR CHANGES IN FEES & GUARANTEES

We get it: no one likes unexpected shipping fees added to their shipping expenses. But with fuller trucks comes higher shipping costs. That's why it's important to stay up-to-date on holiday surcharges and other special fees so you can plan your budget accordingly.

Don't let holiday shipping blow your budget this year!
Consider these tips to stay on track:



Pay attention to holiday surcharges

Refer to the [UPS® website](#) for full details about the Peak Surcharge (and which shipments it applies to), since rates may change as the season progresses. You should also consider the current [fuel surcharge](#) when you begin planning for holiday shipping costs.



Check for suspended service guarantees

Carriers often modify or suspend their money-back service guarantees during the peak shipping season, so make sure to check with your carrier before you ship.



Plan for value-add services

If your shipment is large, irregularly shaped or requires special handling, you may incur an additional fee. Plan your budget ahead of time to account for per-service fees that may be imposed during the peak holiday season.



Start shipping as soon as possible

If you don't allow yourself enough time, you may find yourself paying for a higher (and more expensive) level of service to get your package delivered on time. By getting your shipments out the door right away, you allow yourself the wiggle room to use a more economical delivery speed.

ADDITIONAL HELPFUL RESOURCES

Download [Unishippers' Guide to Understanding Domestic Delivery Options](#) to learn which delivery speed is right for your needs.



Learn about the most common small package shipping fees you may incur by downloading [Unishippers' Guide to Small Package Shipping Fees](#).

EVALUATE INSURANCE OPTIONS

Dealing with lost or damaged packages is always a headache — but especially during the busy holiday season! And while it's a common misconception that shipments are automatically insured by the carrier through their limits of liability, carrier liability may not actually protect the full value of your lost or damaged shipments. That's why we recommend opting for additional insurance for your important and high-value shipments.

Unfortunately, small package damage and theft is more common during the holiday shipping season. Consider these tips to protect your packages in transit:

Invest in insurance

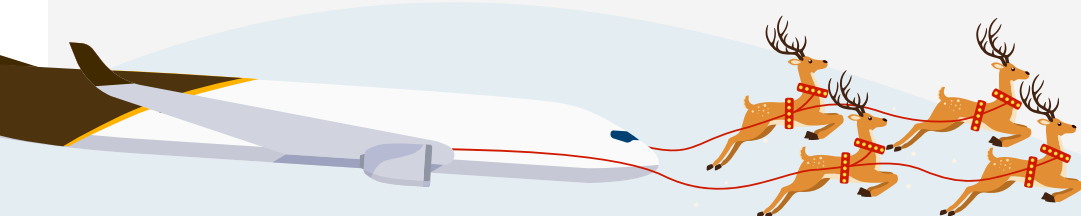
Did you know that small package shipping insurance protects against loss, damage and even theft? Ensure your holiday shipments are fully covered in transit by selecting insurance when booking your shipment.

Sign for deliveries

If you primarily ship high-value orders, you may consider requiring a signature upon delivery. While it may not be right for every shipment, requiring a delivery signature can help ensure your customer actually receives the package.

Opt in for notifications

By signing up for delivery notifications, you and your customer can be notified when the package was delivered. This allows the customer to take the package indoors right away, limiting the likelihood of theft.



REVIEW HOLIDAY CLOSURES

It's no secret that many carriers do not pick up or deliver on major holidays. The majority of shippers will not deliver packages on Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Year's Eve or New Year's Day. Make sure to plan ahead for holiday closures or changes to hours of operation by checking carrier websites ahead of time.



Consider these other quick tips to ensure your packages arrive on time (and without damage), despite holiday closures:

Avoid missed pickups and drop-offs

Did you know that some carriers operate on reduced hours during the holidays? Be aware of any changes to shipping cutoff times so you don't miss any pickups or drop-offs!

Plan ahead for perishables

Since most businesses are closed on the weekends, be sure to map out the best days to ship perishables and other time-sensitive items.

Be mindful of winter weather

If a package might wait outside for a few days at its destination, check the weather to ensure it won't be exposed to extreme temperatures that could damage its contents.

MANAGE CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

The holiday season brings with it winter storms and holiday closures, which can cause unexpected delays for you and your customers. By planning ahead for controllable factors, you can set your business up for peak shipping success and give your customers a happier holiday.

Follow these tips to avoid delays and customer frustrations down the line:



Set clear expectations

From the beginning, make it clear to your customers how quickly you can fill holiday orders (fulfilment times are often slower during the holidays!) and how long it will take for their purchase to arrive.



Don't wait to ship

Ship each package as early as possible to account for any possible service interruptions in transit.



Plan for inclement weather

Make sure to monitor the weather — not only at your own location, but also at the shipping destination — so you can notify customers of any potential weather delays.



Offer proactive customer support

If a shipment is delayed, damaged or lost in transit, provide your customers with regular updates on when a resolution will be reached.

When delays happen, make sure your shipments are first in the pecking order. UPS next-day shipping takes precedence over two- and three-day services, which in turn take priority over ground shipments.



'Tis the Season for Small Package Shipping Success

Don't let unexpected shipping issues derail your holiday season! Your business deserves an affordable and effective holiday shipping strategy — and Unishippers is here to help.

As part of the nation's largest non-retail Authorized Reseller of UPS services, Unishippers is sure to offer UPS shipping prices that fit your holiday budget. Pair that with access to our dedicated team of shipping experts, and you've got a winning combination for peak shipping success.

So why wait? Let our team of shipping experts come up with a customized gameplan to ensure your holiday shipping logistics are a smashing success.

Contact Unishippers to get a holiday shipping assessment today.

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