

Packaging Guide

1. Introduction

This Packaging Guide sets out GOFO Netherlands requirements and recommendations for preparing shipments. Proper packaging protects goods, reduces damage during handling, sorting and transit, and supports on-time delivery.

Compliance with this guide is mandatory for all shippers using GOFO Netherlands services. GOFO Netherlands ships parcels through carrier networks that may use automated sorting equipment. Packaging that does not meet minimum standards may be delayed, rejected, returned, or require manual handling at the shipper's cost.

These guidelines set out the minimum packaging requirements. Customers remain responsible for selecting packaging that is appropriate for the nature, value, and fragility of their goods.

How to use this guide

- Section 2 – Packaging System Overview and Recommended Methods
- Section 3 – General Packaging Principles (all shipments)
- Section 4 – Labelling & Shipping Label Requirements
- Section 5 – Special Category Packaging Requirements
- Section 6 – Insurance & Liability
- Section 7 – Pre-Shipment Checklist

If your product is not listed or you are unsure about packaging requirements, contact GOFO Netherlands before shipping.



Figure 1. A complete shipping package consists of outer packaging, interior protection, sealing and labelling.

2. Packaging System Overview and Recommended Methods

A shipment should be prepared as a complete packaging system. Outer packaging, internal protection, sealing and labelling must work together; weakness in any one part can cause damage, mis-sorting or delivery delay.

2.1 Recommended Packaging Methods

Method	When to use	Minimum requirements
Single-box method	Standard, non-fragile items with low damage risk.	Use a rigid corrugated box, fill all empty spaces, and keep goods away from the box walls, corners and base.
Box-within-a-box method	Fragile, valuable, retail-packaged or sensitive items.	Place the item or retail box inside an inner box, then place it inside a stronger outer box with at least 6 cm cushioning on all sides.
Manufacturer/retail box as inner box	Electronics, branded goods or items with original protective packaging.	Use the retail box as the inner box only. Add a separate outer shipping box unless the retail box is transport-grade and the item is non-fragile.



Figure 2. Use the box-within-a-box method for fragile, retail-packaged or high-risk goods.

2.2 Choosing Interior Protection Materials

Material	Main use	Best for
Bubble wrap	Cushioning and surface protection	Fragile or scratch-sensitive items; use multiple layers where needed.
Air cushions / inflatable packaging	Void filling	Lightweight goods; not suitable as the only protection for heavy or sharp items.
Moulded foam inserts	Cushioning, shaping and impact resistance	Electronics, heavy goods and high-value products.
Kraft paper	Void filling and surface protection	Light to medium-weight items and secondary protection.
High-density polyethylene chips	Void filling and cushioning	Heavier items where firmer fill is required.
Cardboard/foam dividers	Separation and compartmentalization	Multiple items in one parcel, bottles, cosmetics and fragile sets.
Absorbent material	Leak containment	Liquids, cosmetics, bottles and containers.

3. General Packaging Principles

All parcels must meet the following baseline requirements regardless of product type.

3.1 Outer Packaging

For weight-based packaging, use the following minimum guidance unless stricter product-specific requirements apply:

Parcel weight	Recommended outer packaging	Additional reinforcement
0–10 kg	Single-wall or double-wall corrugated box, selected according to product fragility.	Fill void space and protect corners, edges and surfaces.
10–20 kg	Double-wall corrugated box strongly recommended.	Use firmer cushioning and ensure the contents cannot shift.
20–30 kg	Double-wall corrugated box with reinforced sealing.	Reinforce bottom seams and use double-layer taping.

- Use a rigid, rectangular, undamaged corrugated cardboard box. Double-walled corrugated board is strongly recommended for shipments over 10 kg, fragile goods or high-value goods.
- The box must be strong enough to support the full weight of its contents and withstand normal handling, sorting, stacking and transport.
- The product must not protrude from the package or press against the outer walls, corners or base of the box.
- Do not reuse old or previously damaged boxes. Used packaging may be weakened and may fail under transit stress.
- Avoid excessive overpacking by choosing a box that fits the contents. Boxes that are too small may burst, while oversized packaging increases internal movement, damage risk and unnecessary transportation costs.
- Protect corners, edges and surfaces, especially for sharp, heavy, irregular or protruding items.
- Use non-transparent, neutral outer packaging for valuable goods. The outer packaging should not reveal the product type, brand, value or other sensitive product information.
- Moisture-sensitive goods should be placed in a sealed plastic bag before boxing. The outer packaging must also be able to withstand normal weather exposure during transport and delivery.

3.2 Inner Protection & Void Fill

- All empty space inside the box must be filled. Products must not move or shift when the box is gently shaken.
- All visible gaps must be filled with appropriate cushioning so that the product cannot move during handling, sorting or transport; as a practical check, any gap larger than 3 cm should be filled. For fragile or high-value goods, an overall protective clearance of approximately 6 cm between the product and the outer walls is recommended.
- Products must not come into direct contact with outer box walls, corners or base.
- For light goods: use soft void fill such as kraft paper, air cushions or bubble wrap.
- For heavy goods: use firm void fill such as moulded foam inserts or high-density polyethylene chips.
- If multiple items are in one box, wrap each item individually and separate them with dividers, cells or void fill. Select protection material based on the most fragile item in the box.
- Small loose items should be placed inside a secure inner pouch, envelope or smaller box before being placed into the outer packaging.

3.3 Sealing

- Use strong pressure-sensitive adhesive tape, minimum 48 mm wide. Do not use masking tape, washi tape, string, kitchen wrap or weak decorative tape.
- Apply the H-seal method: tape along the centre seam, then along both side edges, on both the top and bottom of the box.
- For heavier parcels, repeat the H-seal with a second layer of tape.
- Parcels should be sealed in accordance with the weight guidance shown in Section 3.1.
- The parcel must not be openable without leaving a visible trace of tampering.
- Do not rely on straps, shrink wrap or retail display packaging as the only method of closure for standard box shipments.

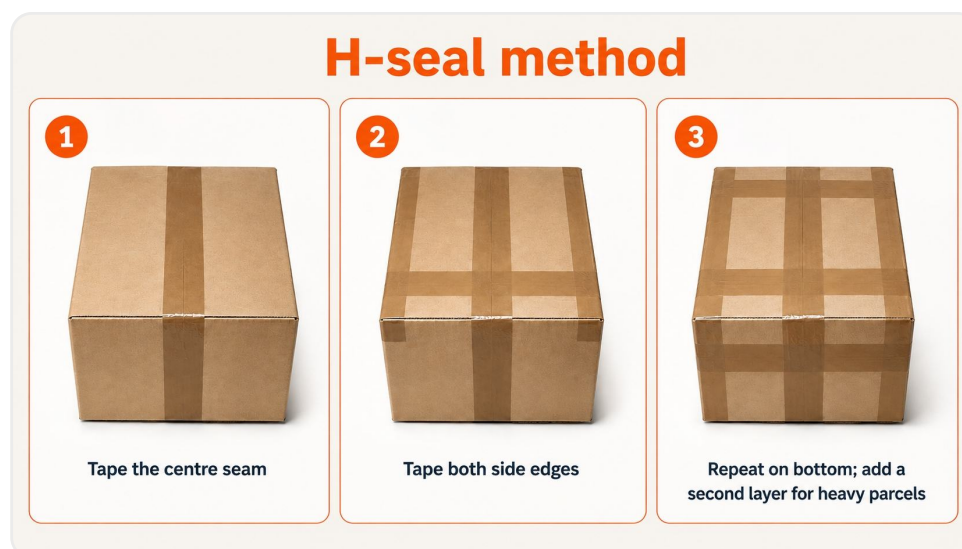


Figure 3. H-seal the top and bottom seams; repeat for heavy parcels.

3.4 Original / Retail Packaging

i Important: The retail or manufacturer's box alone does **NOT** normally constitute adequate shipping packaging. Products in retail boxes must be placed inside an additional outer shipping box with appropriate void fill, unless the retail box is itself heavy-duty corrugated board and the item is non-fragile.

- When in doubt, always add a secondary outer box using the box-within-a-box method.
- Remove or cover retail display information when it reveals the product value or makes the item attractive to theft.

3.5 Multiple Parcels in One Shipment

- Each parcel in a multi-parcel shipment must have its own individual shipping label.
- Do not tape, strap, glue or bind separate parcels together. They must be processed individually by the sorting system.

3.6 Package Strength & Transit Readiness

- Packaging should be able to withstand normal parcel handling, automated sorting, conveyor movement and stacking without the product being damaged or the package opening.
- For fragile, high-value or damage-sensitive goods, the complete package should be able to withstand a drop from 80 cm on faces, edges and corners without product damage.
- If the product cannot meet this readiness standard, use the box-within-a-box method, stronger outer packaging, additional cushioning or product-specific protective inserts before dispatch.

4. Labelling & Shipping Label Requirements



Figure 4. Labels must be flat, visible and scannable; do not place labels over edges or seams.

- Shipping labels must be printed clearly, fully visible, and scannable before handover.
- If any part of the label or barcode is missing, blurred, or affected by print defects, the parcel may not be processed correctly by automated sorting equipment and may be delayed, manually handled, or returned.
- Shippers should check every label before dispatch and reprint the label if any information or barcode is incomplete, unclear, or damaged.
- As a final dispatch check, each parcel label should be checked for barcode readability; where scanning equipment is available, the label should be scanned once before handover.



Figure 5. Examples of incorrect labelling that may affect parcel scanning and delivery.

4.1 Generating Labels

- Shipping labels must be generated through the GOFO Netherlands shipper portal or an approved IT solution.

4.2 Label Placement

- Affix the label to the largest flat face of the parcel.
- Do not place the label across a fold, edge, seam or corner. This can warp the barcode and make it unreadable.
- The label must be fully visible and unobstructed. Straps, tape, shrink film, document pouches or other markings must not cover any part of the label.
- Avoid covering the barcode with any material. If transparent tape is used to protect the label, ensure it is smooth, non-reflective and does not affect barcode readability.
- For cylindrical or non-box parcels, such as rolled tyres, attach the label to the flattest visible surface and keep it centred.

4.3 Labelling Timing

- All parcels must be labelled before or at the time of collection.
- Unlabelled parcels cannot be sorted and may be held at the depot or returned.

4.4 Old Labels & Barcodes

- Remove or fully cover all previous shipping labels, barcodes and routing stickers before affixing the new label.
- Old barcodes on reused boxes must be removed because scanners may read the wrong barcode and misdirect the parcel.

4.5 Recipient & Sender Information

- The recipient's full name, complete street address including house number, postcode, city and country must be correct and legible.
- A valid recipient phone number is required for time-definite, signature, exception-handling or special delivery services where applicable.
- The sender's return address must also appear on the label.

4.6 Additional Documents (International)

- International shipments may require a customs invoice or CN22/CN23 form attached to the outside of the parcel in a transparent adhesive document pouch.
- The document pouch must not overlap or obscure the shipping label or barcode.

5. Special Category Packaging Requirements

The following categories have additional packaging requirements beyond the general principles in Section 3. Where a category is not listed, the general requirements apply. If in doubt, contact GOFO Netherlands before shipping.



Figure 6. Examples of special categories that require additional packaging or advance notice.

5.1 Tyres

- Tyres require special packaging and may be subject to destination-specific requirements. Please contact GOFO Netherlands before shipping tyres.

5.2 Liquids, Bottles & Beverages

- All containers must be securely sealed before packing.
- Every liquid container should be sealed individually and placed in a leak-proof inner bag or equivalent secondary containment before being placed into the outer package.
- Use absorbent material inside the box to contain any leakage.
- Use packaging that fully separates each bottle or container. Divider inserts, individual cells, modular packaging or cushioning materials should prevent bottle-to-bottle contact and contact with the outer box.
- Bottles must not move, collide with each other or press against the outer box during handling, sorting or stacking.
- Glass bottles must be protected against impact and should not rely on separation alone.
- Use stronger corrugated board and internal separation for multi-bottle shipments.

5.3 Fragile Goods (Glass, Ceramics, Porcelain, Stone)

i Insurance notice: Glass, ceramic, porcelain, stone, and similar fragile materials are excluded from standard GOFO Netherlands insurance coverage unless a written agreement is in place. See Section 6.

- Use the box-within-a-box method: place the item in its own inner box with moulded foam or bubble wrap, then place this inside a double-walled outer box with sufficient cushioning on all sides. A clearance of approximately 6 cm is recommended.
- Individual items must not touch each other or the outer box walls.
- For multiple fragile items, use foam or cardboard cell dividers.
- Protect corners and edges with U-profile, corner protectors or moulded inserts where applicable.
- Do not use a single layer of bubble wrap as the only protection for fragile glass or ceramic items.

5.4 Electronics & IT Equipment

- Use the original manufacturer's packaging where available because it is designed for the specific item. Place the retail box inside an additional outer shipping box.
- For items without original packaging: wrap in anti-static bubble wrap, then place in a corrugated box with foam inserts on all six sides.
- Lithium batteries may only be shipped where permitted by the selected service and destination country. The shipper remains fully responsible for compliance with all applicable transport regulations.

5.5 Clothing & Textiles

- Use a corrugated box or a durable poly mailer appropriate for the product. Moisture-sensitive textiles should be protected by a plastic sleeve or inner bag.
- Rolls of fabric or curtain fabric must be wrapped in heavy-duty plastic with multiple wrapping layers.
- Where cutting damage is possible, use warning tape or clear handling markings to indicate that the package should not be cut open with a knife.

5.6 Documents, Books & Printed Matter

- Up to 24 pages or 500 g: use a rigid padded envelope.

- Larger document sets: use a cardboard-backed envelope or box to prevent bending and creasing.
- For sensitive or moisture-prone documents, place inside a sealed plastic sleeve before packaging.
- Single books or catalogues should use close-fitting cardboard mailers or book wraps with edge protection.
- Multiple books or heavy printed matter should be packed in a corrugated box with edge protectors and void fill on all sides.

5.7 Paintings, Photos & Frames

- Protect the front surface with a non-abrasive layer and use rigid board or foam sheets on both sides.
- Use corner protectors for frames and U-profile edge protection for medium or large items.
- Glass-fronted frames must be treated as fragile goods and packed using the box-within-a-box method.
- Posters or rolled prints should be shipped in strong cardboard tubes or rigid rectangular boxes, with the label placed on the most scannable surface.

5.8 Musical Instruments & Sports Equipment

- Use packaging that matches the shape and size of the instrument or equipment.
- Loosen strings or tension elements to reduce stress during transit.
- Hard cases, instrument cases, ski bags or sports bags should be placed inside an additional outer box rather than shipped as the outer packaging.
- Use the box-within-a-box method for instruments without a hard case.
- Protect protruding parts and pressure points with foam or cardboard padding.

5.9 Luggage & Travel Bags

- Labels must be firmly secured. If a label detaches from luggage, the shipment cannot be identified or delivered.
- Include a secondary identification label or card inside the bag with the recipient's name, address and phone number.
- Protect protruding elements such as wheels, handles, straps and corners with foam or cardboard padding.
- Suitcases and travel bags are not recommended as the only outer packaging for fragile or high-value goods.

5.10 Automotive Parts, Metal Items & Hard Plastics

- Heavy or rigid parts must be immobilised with firm cushioning and must not be able to pierce or deform the outer box.
- Sharp edges, protrusions, corners and pressure points must be fully covered with cardboard, foam or moulded protection.
- Metal castings, cast iron and hard plastics are high-risk materials and may be excluded from standard coverage unless otherwise agreed in writing.
- Items containing oils, fluids, batteries or pressurised components may be restricted or prohibited; contact GOFO Netherlands before shipping.

5.11 Food & Confectionery

- Only dry, sealed and non-perishable products suitable for standard parcel transport should be shipped unless otherwise agreed.
- Packaging must prevent leakage, odour transfer, crushing and contamination of other shipments.
- Temperature-controlled or freshness-sensitive products require a separate agreement and are not covered by standard parcel handling assumptions.

5.12 Hazardous & Prohibited Items



Prohibited items: Do not ship dangerous goods through the standard GOFO Netherlands parcel network unless explicitly accepted under a separate written agreement.

- GOFO Netherlands does not accept shipments that pose a danger to handlers, sorting staff or the general public.
- Prohibited items include explosives, compressed or liquefied gases, flammable liquids and solids, self-igniting substances, substances that release flammable gas on contact with water, oxidising agents, organic peroxides, toxic or infectious substances, corrosive substances and any other material hazardous to persons or the environment. For more information about Prohibited Items, please see <https://www.gofo.com/nl/en/prohibited-items-statement-of-gofo-nl/>.
- Shipping prohibited goods is a serious breach of GOFO Netherlands Terms & Conditions and may result in immediate account suspension and liability for all associated costs.

5.13 Items Not Suitable for Automated Sorting

- The following items require manual handling and must be flagged to GOFO Netherlands at ordering. Additional handling fees may apply. GOFO Netherlands reserves the right to determine whether a shipment can be processed through the automated sorting network or requires manual handling.



- Plastic drums, barrels and tubs.
- Bag or sack packaging.
- Wooden crates.
- Metal items or metal-framed goods.
- Parcels exceeding 100 cm in length.
- Plastic-coated rolls and tubes.
- Non-rectangular parcels with protruding elements.
- Parcels without a scannable label or with labels that cannot be read automatically.
- Very small or loose items that cannot be processed safely on a conveyor belt unless placed inside a suitable outer package.

6. Insurance & Liability

6.1 Standard Coverage

GOFO Netherlands provides standard carrier liability coverage for shipments that comply with this Packaging Guide. Claims will only be considered if:

- The goods were packed in accordance with all requirements in this guide;
- The damage or loss is reported within the applicable claims window stated in the service agreement; and
- The claimed value does not exceed the maximum liability per shipment under the applicable carrier tariff.

6.2 Shipper's Responsibility

- The shipper bears full responsibility for ensuring goods are packaged in accordance with this guide and all applicable laws and regulations.
- The shipper shall be liable for any damage caused to GOFO facilities, vehicles, sorting equipment, employees, contractors or other shipments as a result of inadequate packaging, prohibited contents or failure to comply with this Packaging Guide.
- GOFO Netherlands reserves the right to refuse, return or dispose of improperly packaged shipments at the shipper's expense where permitted by the service agreement and applicable law.

6.2 Shipper's Responsibility

- GOFO Netherlands will not be liable for damage attributable to inadequate packaging, incorrect labelling or prohibited content.
- Acceptance of a shipment by GOFO Netherlands does not constitute confirmation that the packaging complies with this Packaging Guide. The shipper remains solely responsible for ensuring that the shipment is packaged appropriately for transport.

6.3 Additional Insurance

Shippers wishing to ensure excluded categories or high-value items above the standard limit should contact GOFO Netherlands to discuss additional options before dispatching goods.

7. Pre-Shipment Checklist

Use this checklist before handing over every shipment to GOFO Netherlands.

Step 1 – Contents and shipment eligibility

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| 1 | Prohibited or undeclared dangerous items are not included | ☐ |
| 2 | Special category requirements have been followed, including individual leak-proof containment for liquids where applicable | ☐ |
| 3 | Recipient name, address, postcode, city, country and phone number are correct where required | ☐ |

Step 2 – Packaging and internal protection

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|---|---|--------------------------|
| 4 | Outer box is undamaged, rigid, appropriately sized for contents and aligned with the applicable weight guidance | ☐ |
| 5 | Retail/product packaging has been placed inside a secondary shipping box where required | ☐ |
| 6 | Multiple items are individually wrapped and separated by dividers or cushioning | ☐ |
| 7 | All empty space is filled; no visible gap larger than 3 cm remains and the product does not move when the box is shaken | ☐ |

Step 2 – Packaging and internal protection (continued)

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|----|--|--------------------------|
| 8 | Fragile items are adequately cushioned and protected from contact with the outer box | ☐ |
| 9 | Box is sealed with an H-seal using pressure-sensitive tape at least 48 mm wide; parcels above 15 kg have reinforced bottom seams and double-layer taping | ☐ |
| 10 | Parcels can withstand automated sorting, conveyor handling and the package requirements in this guide | ☐ |

Step 3 – Labelling, documents and handover

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|----|---|--------------------------|
| 11 | All previous labels and barcodes have been removed or covered | ☐ |
| 12 | The shipping label is printed clearly, placed on the largest flat face and checked for barcode readability before dispatch | ☐ |
| 13 | Label does not span an edge, corner, seam or fold, and the barcode is not covered by tape, straps, transparent tape, protective film or glossy material | ☐ |
| 14 | For international shipments: customs documents are attached in a clear pouch without covering the label | ☐ |



Contact GOFO Netherlands

Questions about packaging? Please contact your **sales or customer service** representative.

Operational support/pick-up issues? Please refer to your **service agreement** for contact details.