

Voluntary Guidelines for

**FLOOR-READY  
MERCHANDISE**

**7.0 Packing Materials**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Edition**

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## Table of Contents

Section	Title	Page
	Table of Contents	3
	Revision Summary	4
7.0	Packing Material	5
7.1	Introduction	5
7.1.1	Overview	5
7.1.2	Benefits	5
7.1.3	Important Considerations	5
7.2	Prerequisites	6
7.3	Evaluation of Shipment Packaging	6
7.3.1	Simplification and Source Reduction	6
7.3.2	Product Protection	6
7.3.3	Safety Hazards	7
7.3.4	Material Costs	7
7.3.5	Handling	7
7.3.6	Selling Floor	7
7.4	Trading Partner Guidelines Discussion	8
7.5	Unnecessary or Excessive Packing	8
7.6	Ready-to-Wear	8
7.6.1	All Categories of Clothing	8
7.7	Accessories	9
7.7.1	All Accessories Categories	9
7.7.2	Handbags/Small Leather Goods (SLG)	10
7.7.3	Women's and Men's Belts	10
7.7.4	Jewelry and Watches	10
7.7.5	Eyewear	10
7.7.6	Backpacks/Fanny Packs/Duffle Bags	11
7.7.7	Fabric Scarves	11
7.7.8	Hats	11
7.7.9	Mittens and Gloves	11
7.7.10	Knit Caps and Scarves	11
7.7.11	Caps and Visors	11
7.7.12	Men's Ties	12
7.8	Footwear/Shoes	12
7.8.1	All Categories of Footwear	12
7.8.2	Sandal Footwear	12
7.8.3	Boots	12
7.8.4	Tailored/Casual	13
7.8.5	Athletic Footwear	13
7.9	Intimate Apparel	13
7.9.1	All Intimate Apparel Categories	13
7.9.2	Soft Garments (Not Padded/Molded)	13
7.9.3	Padded/Molded Garments	13
7.10	Cosmetics	14
7.10.1	Cosmetics/Treatment/Fragrances	14
7.10.2	Cosmetic Accessories	14
7.11	Home	14
7.11.1	Soft Home	14
7.11.2	Hard Home	15

# Revision Summary

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15-Sep-06	All	All	2nd Edition published.

## 7.0 Packing Materials

### 7.1 Introduction

#### 7.1.1 Objective

To establish guidelines for retailers and manufacturers for use in packaging items for delivery and floor presentation.

#### 7.1.2 Overview

These packing standards have the long-term goals of:

- ◆ Appealing physical appearance of the product on the selling floor.
- ◆ Appropriate protection from the in-transit conditions of the product shipment.
- ◆ Elimination of material waste to reduce packing and shipping costs.
- ◆ Reduction of excessive trash and safety hazards in retail stores.
- ◆ Environmental protection.

Effective, but minimal, packing standards require dialogue between trading partners to identify mutually beneficial opportunities.

#### 7.1.3 Important Considerations

Material cost, degradability, and recycling should be part of the considerations. Safety hazards to the customer, warehouse or sales floor associate, as well as the product itself should always be an integral part of the final decision.

#### 7.1.4 Benefits

- ◆ Faster flow of goods to the selling floor.
- ◆ Reduced overall packing costs.
- ◆ Reduced packing material inventories.
- ◆ Reduced trash or material waste.
- ◆ Reduced customer safety hazards or staff injuries.
- ◆ Protection of the environment.

## 7.2 Prerequisites

An understanding of the product itself, the logistics involved in the supply pipeline, and the selling floor presentation standards are key in developing effective packing standards.

## 7.3 Evaluation of Shipment Packaging

Retailers and manufacturers should evaluate packaging materials for both function and disposition. Packaging should minimize potential damage to the product while optimizing pipeline handling. They should consider packaging that minimizes the use of materials and energy sources.

Due to the broad variety of retail items, development of specific packing guidelines should be by product or merchandise category. The goal is a balance between product protection, material costs, handling, safety hazard issues, and selling floor presentation. Retailers and manufacturers may use these VICs FRM packing guidelines as a starting point for the development of a partnership checklist, appropriate to each category under review. This list is not all-inclusive.

### 7.3.1 Simplification and Source Reduction

- ◆ Eliminate excess packing components. Can you:
  - ◆ supply product in bulk or without any packaging?
  - ◆ eliminate package layers or components?
  - ◆ redesign packaging to use less material without compromising the product?
  - ◆ replace multiple small packages with a single, larger, more efficient package size?
- ◆ Reduce packing by using different carton/packaging container forms.
- ◆ If possible, reuse the internal packing in distribution, shipping, or manufacturing processes.

### 7.3.2 Product Protection

- ◆ What kind of protection do you need?
- ◆ Is the carton size suitable for the merchandise?
- ◆ Is there any product damage due to overfilling or underfilling the carton?
- ◆ Will the packing prevent issues such as dye transfer, bleeding, or hardware impressions to any product within the carton?

NOTE: BHT-free tape, which contains acrylic adhesive, will not change or remove color from certain dyestuffs. Losses of color can result from rubber-based or BHT-added tape that encounters the product.

- ◆ Is the packing abrasive to the product?

### 7.3.3 Safety Hazards

- ◆ Could packing materials, such as straight pins, plastic clips, or gel packs, represent any physical danger to supply chain workforce, selling floor associate, or customer?
- ◆ Do plastic bags need to be marked with a suffocation warning?
- ◆ Are there any hazardous elements or strong odor in the packing?

### 7.3.4 Material Costs

- ◆ Have you performed cost comparisons and analysis on alternative packing material?
- ◆ What is the disposition or environmental impact of the packing materials: trash compactor, reuse, recycle, landfill, or incinerator?
- ◆ Does the packing material increase the freight/shipping cost significantly?
- ◆ Is the packing material selected readily available?

### 7.3.5 Handling

Consider the transportation of the goods from point-of-origin to final commercial destination.

- ◆ Is the packing material appropriate for protecting the product from:
  - ◆ Humidity?
  - ◆ Temperature?
  - ◆ Outside carton pressure?
  - ◆ Storage time?
  - ◆ Insects?
- ◆ Is the packing material appropriate for product movement or conveyability within either the manufacturer's or the retailer's DC facility?
- ◆ Are there any restrictions to handling the selected packing material?
- ◆ Do standards change with different quantities of merchandise?

### 7.3.5 Selling Floor

- ◆ How will the product look when opening the carton at the selling location?
- ◆ Could different packing eliminate any special store preparation?
- ◆ What type of disposal or cleanup is required to remove the carton packing from the selling location?

## 7.4 Trading Partner Guidelines Discussion

The key to a successful trading partnership discussion is:

- ◆ respect and understanding of the other participant's basic needs and requirements,
- ◆ clearly defined expectations and standards,
- ◆ understanding each other's capabilities, and
- ◆ a desire to develop a workable solution.

Open, active communication between all participants will lead to a strong business relationship. Both retailers and manufacturers should document and distribute all finalized standards and requirements to appropriate personnel within each partner's organization.

## 7.5 Unnecessary or Excessive Packing

It should be the objective of both retailers and manufacturers to ensure that merchandise arrives in a saleable, "floor-ready" condition. At the same time, we should challenge ourselves to eliminate excessive or unnecessary packing material, wherever possible, that incurs additional expense and time to insert or remove in the supply chain process. Eliminate or minimize the following packing materials:

- |                     |                 |                  |                     |
|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ◆ Bubble wrap       | ◆ Jet clips     | ◆ Safety pins    | ◆ Styrofoam peanuts |
| ◆ Cardboard         | ◆ Kraft paper   | ◆ Scotch tape    | ◆ Tie-backs         |
| ◆ Collar protection | ◆ Metal banding | ◆ Shredded paper | ◆ Tissue Paper      |
| ◆ Confetti paper    | ◆ Newspaper     | ◆ Shrink wrap    | ◆ Twist ties        |
| ◆ Foam              | ◆ Rubber bands  | ◆ Straight pins  | ◆                   |

If protective packing is required, ensure that it is removable with one swipe or motion. Within each section, refer to specific use examples.

## 7.6 Ready-to-Wear

### 7.6.1 All Categories of Clothing

- ◆ Eliminate straight pins or safety pins
  - ◆ Exception: Men's, boy's, or women's woven dress shirts, men's woven sport shirts.
- ◆ Eliminate collar protection
  - ◆ Exception: folded shirts or shirts with an "I-board" inserted.

- ◆ Eliminate all clips, jet-clips, tie-backs
- ◆ Minimize twist ties, and rubberbands
- ◆ Eliminate foam cloth and self goods
  - ◆ Exceptions: Leather, pleather, napped fabric (such as velour, velvet, suede, or corduroy), and delicate fabrics (such as silk).
- ◆ Chipboard is acceptable if placed in the bottom of the shipping carton or on top of the goods to protect the merchandise from knife cuts at time of carton opening. It is not acceptable to insert chipboard sheets in between the units inside the carton.
- ◆ Do not use fillers such as confetti, Styrofoam peanuts, paper, cardboard, or tissue paper to fill up the empty space within the cartons. Use the appropriate size carton for the items unless a partnership agreement between the manufacturer and retailer exists.
  - ◆ Exception: A single sheet of crumpled kraft paper is permissible.

## 7.7. Accessories

### 7.7.1 All Accessories Categories

- ◆ Minimize the layers of packing materials. If boxed, do not also use plastic.
- ◆ Encase multiple units of the same style in one plastic bag. Use a plastic bag to cover a single item only as a secondary alternative.
- ◆ Eliminate double bagging. The outside shipping carton provides ample protection.
- ◆ Eliminate scotch tape anywhere inside the plastic bag protective covering. Use BHT free tape, which prevents dye transfer, to secure/close bag.
- ◆ When a item needs protection, one layer of tissue paper is appropriate to use inside the plastic bag wrapped around the item or twisted around the hardware.
- ◆ Use one layer of tissue only between plastic items on the inside to prevent fusing.
- ◆ We recommend tissue bundles if you must insert stuffing. Do not use loose shredded material.
- ◆ Use an individual saleable display box to protect an item; it is an acceptable alternative to packing materials.
- ◆ Use open-ended plastic sleeves, with no tape and no heat-sealed ends.
- ◆ Eliminate individual packaging. Wrap multiple units of the same style together.
- ◆ Use an appropriately sized shipping carton.
  - ◆ Avoid over packing, which causes carton bulging.
  - ◆ Avoid Underpacking, which can cause carton crushing.
- ◆ Appropriately tape the shipping carton but do not band in any way.

- ◆ Limit gel packs to one per item.

### 7.7.2 Handbags/Small Leather Goods (SLG)

- ◆ Handbag straps
  - ◆ Minimize cardboard collars; use twisted tissue where possible. Collars are appropriate for packing short strap handbags.
  - ◆ Secure fan folded straps with paper tape; do not use cardboard rings or scotch tape.
  - ◆ Secure chain straps on the inside of the bag where possible. If you cannot place it inside the purse, wrap the chain with tissue.
- ◆ Flaps
  - ◆ It is appropriate to use foam, paper, or a cardboard insert. Do not use cardboard tubes.
- ◆ If the vendor provides a cloth storage bag, tuck it inside the bag; do not use as outside packing.
- ◆ Specialty bags with sequins or other embellishments (minaudieres) require additional protective packaging. Vendors should determine necessary packing materials.
- ◆ Small Leather Goods
  - ◆ Packing standards similar to handbags (flaps, etc.) are appropriate.
  - ◆ Cardboard sleeve around item is appropriate if an acetate cover on a gift box is used.

### 7.7.3 Women's and Men's Belts

- ◆ Accessory guidelines apply.

### 7.7.4 Jewelry and Watches

- ◆ Package individually to protect during transport.
- ◆ Individual saleable display boxes:
  - ◆ Merchandise should be packed inside, not in a separate carton.
  - ◆ Can be used to protect an item.
  - ◆ Is an acceptable alternative to packing materials.

### 7.7.5 Eyewear

- ◆ Minimum standards require a protective, removable film to be applied to lenses before packing in a box.
- ◆ A layer of tissue or foam inside the shipping carton can be used to prevent frame shifting or movement while in transit.
- ◆ If frame hardware requires protection, utilize one of these options:
  - ◆ a plastic sleeve
  - ◆ vendor supplied eyeglass case
  - ◆ layer of tissue or foam

### 7.7.6 Backpacks/Fanny Packs/Duffel Bags

- ◆ Use of packing or stuffing material
- ◆ inside of product is not recommended and should be avoided to minimize waste and shipping carton usage.
- ◆ Plastic bags should not be used for individual products.
- ◆ No packing material/filler is necessary inside of shipping carton.
- ◆ Shipping carton should not be lined with plastic or contain plastic lining.

### 7.7.7 Fabric Scarves

- ◆ Overall accessory guidelines apply.

### 7.7.8 Hats

Per GS1 US definition: constructed hats with or without a brim.

- ◆ Use a plastic bag if necessary to protect item(s) from dirt, etc.
- ◆ Preferred method of packing is wrapping or stacking multiple units of the same style together. Limit individual packaging.
- ◆ Tissue bundles or air pillows (no newspaper or loose shredded material) are recommended for retaining the shape of the hat's crown.

### 7.7.9 Mittens and Gloves

- ◆ Overall accessory guidelines apply.
- ◆ Use one layer of tissue to protect a leather item before inserting in a plastic bag.

### 7.7.10 Knit Caps and Scarves

Per GS1 US definition: unconstructed hats with no brim or headband.

- ◆ Overall accessory guidelines apply.

### 7.7.11 Caps and Visors

Per GS1 US definition: caps that do not have a full a brim or headband, such as baseball caps, berets, visors, or beanies.

- ◆ Overall accessory guidelines apply.

### 7.7.12 Men's Ties

- ◆ A single piece of heavy paper or cardboard may be used to stabilize ties. Multi packing of the same style is encouraged.
- ◆ To restrict shifting or movement of ties and prevent fabric damage, use paper strips with adhesive ends to secure the ties to the cardboard stabilizer.
- ◆ A plastic bag can be used to cover the entire stabilizer with the ties.

## 7.8 Footwear/Shoes

### 7.8.1 All Categories of Footwear

- ◆ Pairs of shoes are packaged individually within an enclosed cardboard shoebox with reinforced lids to prevent boxes from being crushed in transit and when stacked in storerooms.
  - ◆ Durable lids should contain folded edges for added strength.
- ◆ Multiple shoeboxes are packed within a corrugated cardboard box for shipping.
- ◆ Within shoebox
  - ◆ One layer of tissue is appropriate to wrap shoes for protection.
  - ◆ Depending on material and construction a plastic bag may be used for each shoe to prevent rubbing against each other (ex. - suede, velvet, napped fabrics).
  - ◆ Tissue bundle or plastic form may be used to stuff toe box to maintain shape.
  - ◆ Tissue paper may be used to wrap special ornament/hardware.
  - ◆ Tissue bundles at heel and toe may be used to secure items in place.
  - ◆ One silicone gel pack in each shoebox may be used to minimize the possibility of mildew during shipping.

### 7.8.2 Sandal Footwear

- ◆ Tissue bundles or plastic forms may be used to maintain shape and minimize damage during transit.
- ◆ A single piece of chipboard may be placed between the sandals to allow one shoe to overlap the other.
  - ◆ Prevents the item from being flattened
  - ◆ Allows for smaller shoeboxes and shipping containers (less cubic volume)

### 7.8.3 Boots

- ◆ Boots are individually wrapped in tissue paper and/or plastic bag to avoid damage.

- ◆ A cardboard insert lines the shaft of the boot.
- ◆ Tissue bundles are placed within the shaft to prevent collapse and maintain shape of the shaft
- ◆ Single piece of cardboard may be used to keep boots in place during transit.

#### 7.8.4 Tailored/Casual

- ◆ A plastic rod within the shoe that extends from tissue paper packed in toe to back counter is used to maintain shape and prevent bending of topline during transit.
- ◆ Depending on material and construction, a cardboard sleeve may be inserted between shoes to prevent damage during shipping.

#### 7.8.5 Athletic Footwear

- ◆ Minimal tissue bundles placed inside shoe.
- ◆ Single layer of tissue paper to wrap shoe pair.

### 7.9 Intimate Apparel

#### 7.9.1 All Intimate Apparel Categories

- ◆ Use of polybags should be minimized.
- ◆ Acceptable uses for polybags are:
  - ◆ Multiple garments shipped as a package.
  - ◆ To protect garments from wrinkling, soiling, or fabric picks.
  - ◆ To serve as a cushion for padded/molded garments to prevent crushing.

#### 7.9.2 Soft Garments (Not Padded/Molded)

- ◆ Garments should be flat packed in the appropriate size carton without polybags, fillers, or inserts.

#### 7.9.3 Padded/Molded Garments

- ◆ The preferred method of packing padded/molded product is to place garments on top in multi-pack cases to prevent crushing.
- ◆ If packing on top does not prevent crushing, the following alternatives may be used:
  - ◆ Pack garments in a polybag to serve as a cushion and prevent crushing.
  - ◆ Use carton inserts such as cardboard, tissue paper, or dowels to separate and prevent crushing.

- ◆ Use stuffing or molds inside garments to preserve garment shape and prevent crushing.

## 7.10 Cosmetics

### 7.10.1 Cosmetics/Treatment/Fragrances

- ◆ Encase merchandise in corrugated boxes or shrink wrapped unipacks.
- ◆ Use inflatable poly bags inside the shipping carton to ensure goods are secure from shifting and moving while in transit.
- ◆ Bio-degradable peanuts are not recommended for inside the shipping carton. The peanuts contain food preservatives that may attract pests and rodents.
- ◆ Crumpled paper may not be used as filler because it does not adequately protect the merchandise. No loose shredded material like plastic peanuts. No newspaper.
- ◆ Gift with Purchase (GWP)/Purchase with Purchase (PWP)
  - ◆ A single piece of cardboard between each merchandise layer is acceptable for Cosmetic GWP's.
  - ◆ Cosmetic and Fragrance GWP's/PWP's may be encased in individual plastic bags if needed to protect merchandise during shipping.
  - ◆ Decorative PWP/GWP bags or totes may need additional protective packaging. Vendor may determine what type of packaging is needed.
  - ◆ Secure fan folded bag straps with paper tape, no scotch tape.
  - ◆ Ship flat, no stuffing or filler is required.

### 7.10.2 Cosmetic Accessories

- ◆ Cosmetic Bags
  - ◆ Cosmetic bags/travel bags may be encased in individual plastic bags inside shipping carton.
  - ◆ Use a single piece of tape if needed to close bag. BHT free tape prevents dye transfer.
- ◆ Home Fragrances
  - ◆ Home Fragrance sprays, oils, and candles may be shipped in an inner corrugated box with corrugated dividers or inflatable polybags to prevent shifting while in transit. Do not use plastic peanuts for packing. Small items get missed or thrown out.
  - ◆ Bags of potpourri do not require additional packing.

## 7.11 Home

### 7.11.1 Soft Home

- ◆ Categories
  - ◆ Rugs
  - ◆ Bedding
  - ◆ Decorative textiles
  - ◆ Pillows
  - ◆ Bath rugs, shower curtains, and accessories
  - ◆ Table linens
  - ◆ Towels
  - ◆ Wall hangings
  - ◆ Window treatments
- ◆ No fillers should be used such as confetti paper, foam, peanuts, cardboard, or Kraft paper to fill up empty space within the cartons.
  - ◆ Exception: Molded styrofoam as part of package to secure small breakables.
- ◆ The appropriate size carton for items should be used unless a partnership agreement between the manufacturer and retailer exists.
- ◆ Eliminate scotch taping individual saleable packages together inside cartons.
- ◆ Tape to secure carton closure should not be in contact with saleable package.
- ◆ An individual saleable package is an acceptable alternative to packaging materials.

### 7.11.2 Hard Home

- ◆ Categories
  - ◆ Cookware
  - ◆ Glassware
  - ◆ Housewares
  - ◆ Small Electrics
  - ◆ China
  - ◆ Silver