

Stock Packaging Evaluation

For users of stock packaging (packaging that isn't custom designed for your product), there are a wide variety of material options available. Choices you make can go a long way in terms of waste prevention and recyclability. The following is a list of commonly used stock packaging materials. Recommendations for best management practices are given to aid in preventing waste, and in the reduction of overall environmental impacts.

If you are using custom designed or engineered packaging (not stock packaging), [click here](#) for a packaging evaluation checklist.

General Recommendations

As a general rule of thumb, the best option is to *reduce* packaging. *Reuse* is the next best option, followed by *recyclability* and *recycled content*.

- **Reduce:** Use properly sized material. Avoid packaging that is over sized.
- **Reuse:** Reuse incoming material where appropriate.
- **Recyclable:** Use materials that are easy for your customers to recycle.
- **Recycled Content:** Once you've chosen which packaging material(s) you plan to use (corrugated, polyethylene, etc.), select material containing highest possible recycled content. (Be cautious of choosing a material just because it is easy to recycle and/or contains high levels of post-consumer content, however. [Click here](#) for additional details.)

Corrugated Boxes

- For non-fragile, non-breakable items, consider the use of flexible packaging, such as shipping bags, instead of a box. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
- Minimize carton, dunnage, and shipping requirements with a carton that is properly sized. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
- Maximize carton volume relative to fiber content through selective box geometry. Generally speaking, with regular slotted cartons, the most efficient shape (least fiber per unit of volume) is a carton where the length and depth are the same (or very similar), and the width is about half of the length. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
- Utilize multi-scored cartons to reduce the amount of void fill required and the cube of the box when shipped. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
- Avoid cartons that are overly protective:
 - Use proper corrugated thickness (single wall, double wall, etc.).
 - Use proper corrugated test strength for product weight and required durability. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
 - Use ECT rated cartons over Bursting Test rated cartons for material savings.
- Use unbleached kraft (brown) corrugated over white.
- If possible, avoid using shallow cartons that have excessively large flap areas. If a shallow carton is required, consider an end-loading carton (which will have much smaller flap areas), a telescoping design style tray, or a die cut carton. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)
- Use shredded corrugated as an effective void fill dunnage.
- Make your corrugated "reuse friendly" by minimizing labels and unnecessary markings.

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Shipping Bags

- Choose the smallest millage (thickness) bag to safely ship your product.
- Choose the smallest size (volume) bag to safely ship your product.
- Consider bags that are made of a single material and therefore easier to recycle.

Bubble Wrap

- Use bubble wrap that is slit and perforated to match you product. Typically this is done by the manufacturer at no additional charge.
- Reuse inbound bubble wrap.
- Encourage your customers to reuse bubble wrap.

Packaging Peanuts

- Many packaging centers accept used peanuts for reuse. For a drop off location call the Peanut Hotline at 1-800-828-2214.
- Reuse inbound packaging peanuts.
- Encourage your customers to reuse packaging peanuts. Print information about reuse (and the Peanut Hotline) on upper box flaps.

Dunnage Paper

- Use shredded office paper as an effective void fill dunnage.
- Use misprinted paper as dunnage. Some kraft papers are printed for various commercial uses. Occasionally misprints occur and printers may discard the misprinted rolls of kraft for recycling or offer at a reduced rate for dunnage. Using these materials prior to recycling is environmentally preferable. If your customers don't mind receiving dunnage paper that is pre-printed, see if you can source this material instead of new dunnage.

Sheet Foam

- Use sheet foam that is slit and perforated to match the size of your product. Typically this is done by the manufacturer at no additional charge.

Inflatable Air Packs (Pillow Packs)

- Use an appropriate length and width for the required void fill space. Depending on the manufacturer, roll widths are available in either 8" or 10". Filling equipment can be set for varying lengths.
- Make sure to properly inflate the pillow packs depending on the application. This can have a large effect on the amount of dunnage used. ([Click here](#) for additional details.)

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