



How to properly 'palletize' your items for shipping

What you'll need:

- A good, sturdy pallet
- A roll of shrink wrap (aka 'stretch wrap')
- Strapping material such as rope, twine or ratchet straps
- Scrap cardboard and/or foam (optional)

1. Choose a good pallet and stack your items: Make sure the pallet to be used is sturdy without any loose boards and that it is large enough to accommodate the items you are palletizing without anything hanging over the edges of the pallet (more on that point below). The average pallet size is 48" long x 40" wide, but several other pallet sizes exist and if necessary, a pallet can be built with basic carpentry skills. Please note the total height of the stacked items should not exceed 6 feet.

Place your items to be shipped onto the pallet. Be certain that the items are stacked in a manner so they remain as level, square and as close to one another on the pallet as possible. Place larger and heavier items on the bottom, and smaller/lighter items towards the top. Brace items against one another as tight as possible (if the items have room to shift around after you've applied the shrink wrap, the entire unit will become loose and ineffective). Again, try to make sure nothing hangs over the edges of the pallet. This will lower the risk of something becoming damaged during transport. The reason for keeping everything within the boundaries of the pallet is so the pallet, not the items, will take any impact that may occur (against the inside wall of the truck or a forklift for instance). For anything close to the edge or for any fragile items, you may also want to attach scrap cardboard and/or foam padding for extra protection prior to adding shrink wrap.

2. Attaching the shrink wrap: Take your shrink wrap roll and peel out about a yard of plastic. Squeeze 8 inches or so of the end together into a loose rope shape and thread this through and around one corner of the pallet. Don't bother tying a knot. Simply hold the end snug as you fold the rest of the yard over it. The plastic sticks to itself so this should be sufficient to keep it from pulling loose when you begin to wrap. Wrap around the base of the pallet in the same direction that was begun when you made the fold. Ensure that you wrap the base enough times so that your plastic will not slip off. Wrap the base at least four or five times and make sure the wrap goes underneath any corners in your stack. Pull the roll tightly just before going around each corner. Twisting the wrap as you go around will increase the strength of it. Continue wrapping so that the next layer is joined firmly to the first and so on. Be sure to take as much stretch as possible out of the plastic film while you are wrapping. When you reach the top of the pallet you can either end there or wrap back down the pallet again. When the stack is firm, tear the film apart from the roll and fold the end of it under the edge of one of the wraps at the side of the pallet. This will keep your wrap job from coming undone. ***You want the entire pallet to feel like one solid unit. Everything should move as one, without wobbling***



3. Strapping: While sometimes a good enough shrink wrap job is sufficient to keep the items from shifting on the pallet, it is strongly recommended that you also attach some type of strapping material to the pallet, especially if the pallet is stacked over 4 feet tall. Strapping will ultimately 'bind' the contents on the pallet to the pallet itself. Strapping can be done with several items including rope, twine or in the case of a tall stack, we suggest using ratchet straps. To properly strap the pallet, you will want to use at least two separate straps. Feed the first strap through the area of the pallet where the 'forks' of a pallet jack or forklift will enter the pallet. Bring the strapping all the way around the stack and back to where it began and then pull (or ratchet) as tight as possible before tying off the straps. If necessary, use 'edge-protectors' such as scrap cardboard to spread the load of the straps on any points where the straps 'grab' the contents of the pallet. This will prevent the straps from damaging the items that they cross. Repeat this process with at least one more strap through the other 'fork-entry' area of the pallet.

4. Test and finish: The final step is to ensure the items do not shift from the pallet. Again, the contents should be 'binded' to the pallet so that everything feels like one solid unit, without any shifting. Try pushing the upper items to see if the load seems tight or loose. If you see the plastic ripple or the stack wobble, you either didn't wrap tightly enough or it needs more layers of wrap and/or better strapping.

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions or concerns about palletizing your items.

If you don't already have access to a pallet, new and used pallets are sold by various pallet companies in almost every town. Shrink wrap and strapping material can usually be purchased from a local retailer such as Home Depot, Lowes, U-Haul etc., or you can purchase these items online from such retailers as www.uline.com .

Please visit www.shipapallet.com/photos.html for example photos of how shipments should be properly palletized.