

Understanding the process of freight

The safe and efficient transport of your exhibit materials is critical to your exhibiting success! This guide will help you understand the important processes of shipping and material handling

Freeman¹

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Shipping: an overview

Shipping is the movement of freight from one location to another by a carrier. This process is also commonly referred to as “transportation”. Your materials can be shipped over the road, by air, by rail, or even by boat.

Inbound shipping

- The transportation of your exhibit materials from the original destination to a venue’s warehouse or dock

Outbound shipping

- The transportation of your exhibit materials from the event site to its final destination. All outbound shipping requires a completed Material Handling Agreement (MHA) before leaving the event, regardless of your carrier.

Let’s get you moving!

Request a shipping quote

- Freeman is ready to handle all your shipping and transportation needs – we offer inbound, outbound, and round-trip shipping
- Visit our online tool to arrange shipping in advance or speak to one of our specialists at 800-995-3579

Visit the online store for more information:

[Find show & order](#)

Watch how the process works:

[See the video](#)

Material handling: an overview

Material handling is a service that includes the unloading of exhibit materials, storing them for up to 30 days in advance at the warehouse address, delivering them to the booth, the storage of empty containers during the event, and reloading the freight onto outbound carriers when the event closes. Material handling should not be confused with shipping exhibit materials to and from the event, as both services typically have separate charges.

To learn more about the material handling process and learn additional planning tips, review the next tab and access the additional resources listed below. Notifications for the handling of your shipments can also be set up on Freeman's online store.

Be the first to pack up with priority empty returns

- Freeman offers priority empty return labels as a service to exhibitors who wish to receive empty their containers faster at the end of the event to speed up their move out.
- A limited number of labels are available for each available show, so order yours on the online store or at show site before they sell out

Visit the online store for more information:

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View additional FAQs

[More FAQs](#)



Your freight's journey

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more information:

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Shipping →

Material handling →

Shipping →

1

Pre-event

Shipment leaves your facility or prior event on selected carrier

Carrier transports shipment to advance warehouse or event site

2

Move-in

Shipment is unloaded from carrier and moved to booth space

Once fully unpacked, containers must be labelled with empty stickers

3

Exhibit days

Empty containers are picked up, stored, and returned to booth at close of event

4

Move-out

Once freight is packed, MHA must be created, completed, and submitted to release freight

Submitted MHA allows freight to be matched with carrier and loaded for outbound shipping

5

Post-event

Carrier transports shipment from event site to its final destination

Shipment is unloaded at final destination

Shipping and handling glossary

Visit the online store for
more information:

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Advance warehouse

Location to receive freight before start of show. Freight is stored at this location and then moved to the event at the designated time.

Cart service

A flat rate material handling service where laborers will assist exhibitors unload or load their personal vehicles. The service is meant to support smaller exhibitors and typically has a weight or time limit outlined in the event information.

Crated

Material that is skidded or is in any type of shipping container that can be unloaded at the dock with no additional handling required

Dark day

Terminology for a day during move-in or move-out of the facility when event services are shut down

Double time labor

Refers to a pay rate for work performed that is double the normal hourly rate

Exhibitor service center

A centralized area where representative of various event services can be contacted or located

Material handling agreement (or “MHA”)

Freeman’s official outbound shipping authorization form that allows freight to be released to your chosen carrier

Overtime labor

Typically, work performed before 8:00 a.m. and after 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, and all hours on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays (varies by city)

Privately owned vehicle

A vehicle such as a passenger car, van, or other vehicles whose primary function is to move people. Privately owned vehicles, or “POV’s,” are distinguished from box trucks, tractor-trailers, and other vehicles whose purpose is to move freight.

Quick facts

Essential show information at-a-glance provided by Freeman

Special handling

Materials delivered in such a manner that requires additional handling, such as ground unloading, stacked and constricted space unloading, designated piece unloading, loads mixed with pad-wrapped material, loads failing to maintain shipping integrity, carpet and/or pad-only shipments, and shipments that require additional time, equipment or labor to unload. Federal Express and UPS are included in this category due to their delivery procedures.

Straight time labor

The hours considered normal business hours

Target date

The specified date and time to move into and/or out of an exhibit hall

Uncrated

Material that is shipped loose or pad-wrapped, and/or unskidded machinery without proper lifting bars or hooks

Cost saving tips: shipping

- Select a carrier familiar with trade shows. Experience saves time and money.
- Consider using the official show carrier. This can eliminate fees and surcharges.
- Provide your carrier with pertinent show information such as event name, booth number, marshalling location, move-in times and dates, and move-out information.
- Make sure your shipment is properly packaged, labeled, and insured.
- Plan your shipping in advance to avoid air freight or rush delivery surcharges.
- Weigh your shipment prior to giving it to your carrier, and request your carrier obtain a certified weight for your shipment to avoid delays and billing discrepancies.
- Ask your carrier about assessorial charges, waiting time fees, fuel surcharges, and other charges associated with trade show transportation. Oftentimes the original quote from a traditional carrier may exceed that of an official show carrier.
- Find out if your carrier will consolidate your shipment with other shipments. This can affect your target times, pick-up times, and material handling costs.
- Choose a carrier that will not split your shipment up in transit. Split shipments can lead to multiple material handling charges rather than just one.

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Cost saving tips: material handling

- ❑ Read the service kit and be familiar with move-in and move-out times, targets, and rates for material handling. This can reduce exposure to overtime, late fees, surcharges, and re-routing.
- ❑ Consider advance shipping to the warehouse instead of shipping direct to the event. Advance shipping can end up less expensive if direct shipping involves overtime and can provide peace of mind by avoiding expedited and late arrival surcharges.
- ❑ Consider the weight and design of your display. Lightweight fabrics can create a dramatic visual effect, while saving significant material handling charges.
- ❑ Consider renting an exhibit. This eliminates material handling charges, as well as shipping, storage, and the cost of building an exhibit.
- ❑ Consolidate small packages into larger shipments. This can eliminate multiple charges for individual shipments and surcharges associated with small package carriers.
- ❑ Palletize or package loose items to avoid loose and uncrated surcharges.
- ❑ Avoid special handling surcharges by instructing that your shipment be loaded in a manner that does not require additional labor or equipment to be unloaded or use an LTL carrier/forwarder.

Visit the online store for more information:

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Stay in contact with Freeman

Freeman is committed to providing outstanding service to all our customers. If you have additional questions or require support to prepare for your event, please contact us in the way that works best for you:

Access easy-to-find information, products, and services

- This online tool allows you to view important event information, order products and services, communicate with our service representatives, set up notifications, and much more.

Find show & order

Our goal is to provide you with an exceptional exhibiting experience every time. Please let us know if there is anything we can do to enhance your experience!

Contact our exhibitor service teams

- Whether you need a simple question answered or require additional guidance and support, Freeman's award-winning service team is available to you.
- Contact our experts by calling 888-508-5054 or emailing exhibitorsupport@freeman.com