

Cargo Tips:

Air Shipments

CHUBB



Ocean cargo policies are designed to protect goods in virtually all modes of transportation, including air.

While most shippers recognize the traditional perils of waterborne transit, like contact with seawater or condensation (or “ship’s sweat”), they must also be aware that water damage can occur to air freight. Precipitation can occur at any time and shipments are often left uncovered on the tarmac awaiting flight arrival, during unloading from the aircraft, or when being shuttled to and from the cargo terminal. Therefore, some level of protection must be provided for any goods susceptible to water damage.

On international wide-body planes, airlines will consolidate shipments and load them onto Unit Load Devices (ULD) known in the industry as cookie sheets. Cargo on these flat aluminum platforms are secured in place with open nylon webbing, so water can easily penetrate outer packaging materials.

Here are some things to consider when preparing air shipments:

Packaging:

- Use new, well-constructed interior and exterior packaging suitable for your product. There are certain carton materials that have a wax coating to help minimize water seeping through the outer carton. Plastic linings and wraps within or around the cartons can add another layer of protection.
- Ensure that all wood packaging for filling voids and blocking/bracing your cargo are dry (under 15 percent moisture content) and be marked as compliant with ISPM 15 (pest-free) regulations.
- Ensure that all packaging and cargo securement materials are stored in a temperature and humidity-controlled environment prior to use.
- Provide clear instructions for cargo handlers and transportation personnel by using written cautions and internationally recognized marks such as “Keep Dry.”

- Cover top and sides of each palletized load fully with plastic.
- Consider adding a physical barrier around a pallet if your goods are small enough to be pilfered. Sheets of plywood or chicken wire can make it difficult for someone to tear the plastic wrap and have access to the cargo.
- Pack goods that are extremely susceptible to water damage in moisture-vapor barriers.
- Apply protective preservative sprays, coatings or films such as Volatile Corrosion Inhibitors (VCI) directly on exposed and/or critical metal surfaces or components. You can also use VCI plastic to encapsulate any products susceptible to wetting or condensation.

Handling:

These requests can be made as part of a Service Level Agreement or notated on the air waybill.

- Request freight forwarder and/or airline instruct cargo handlers to store your shipments in covered areas that are free of roof leaks or other possible sources of water ingress.
- Request freight forwarder and/or airline instruct cargo handlers to keep your goods off the ground so they will not be contacted by standing water.
- Request freight forwarder and/or airline instruct cargo handlers to minimize the amount of time your goods are staged in areas open to the elements. Once your goods are unloaded, they should be covered immediately, either in sheltered areas at the ramp or in the cargo terminal.
- Request freight forwarder and/or airline instruct cargo handlers to place your goods away from any cargo that may give off high levels of moisture.

Transportation:

- Carefully inspect trucks transporting your shipment to the airline or air freight forwarder for holes, tears and other defects that may allow water to enter. Make sure the cargo space is dry.
- If the shipment is leaving your facility on an air cargo pallet or in a container, ensure the truck has the stops raised (in UP position) and rollers lowered prior to departure.

Procedures in case of loss:

- Perform a visual inspection of your goods once they arrive to identify any potential water damage. If you notice water damage, separate sound items from wet items and remove contents of wet packaging to let dry and/or repackage.
- If you discover any damage
 - Send the carrier/airline written notice as soon as possible but no later than 14 days after delivery.
 - **Immediately** contact your insurance agent or broker and Chubb Claims. Make appropriate notations of the arrival condition on the air waybill or truck bill of lading. Since a complete check of all the cargo will likely not be practical, you can state on the shipping document “subject to full inspection.”

Remember: a short amount of time in rain, sleet or snow can adversely affect the condition of your goods moving via air, but just a little precaution may be able to prevent a loss.

Contact us

Chubb Marine policyholders have access to the expertise and guidance of our Marine Risk Management Specialists.

Have a question?

Email us at MarineRiskUS@chubb.com.

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