Preparing your parcels? Here's how to do it

This guide shows you how to correctly prepare your parcels for shipping.
The guidelines apply to shipments in Belgium of up to 30 kg.

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Packaging: your unique change to shine

With online sales, packaging is the only physical contact with a customer. So it pays to invest in it. There's more to packaging than meets the eye.

Protection

You use packaging to send your products primarily because you want them to **get to your customers in perfect condition**. A product that arrives damaged not only creates a bad customer experience, it also leads to unnecessary hassle and extra costs. So it's important to package your products properly and to choose solid packaging.

Visibility

Your packaging is an extension of your webshop, a unique opportunity to **increase your brand recognition in the offline world** and to set you apart from other webshops. So don't just pick a traditional brown box – personalise your packaging. Your logo, your corporate colours, a personal message… There are lots of ways to make your packaging stand out.

User experience

Packaging shouldn't just be sturdy and attractive. It also needs to be **user-friendly**. By providing a return label, you make it easy for customers to return products. If they don't need to return anything, they can **use your packaging to send a parcel themselves**. It's handy for your customers and good for your visibility.

Sustainability

With packaging made from recycled material that can also be reused, you are showing that sustainability is important to you. And by adapting the size and shape of your packaging to your products, more parcels can be transported in one go and you **help to reduce CO_2 emissions**. To give you an idea: the empty space in containers is worth 122 million tons of CO_2 a year*.

* DS Smith & Forbes Insights

Preparing your parcels? It just takes 4 simple steps!

On the following pages, discover all the guidelines for correctly preparing your parcels.

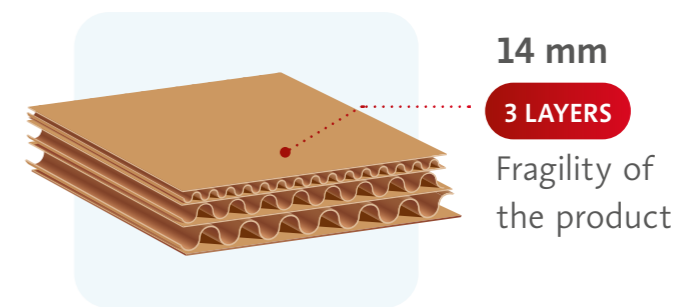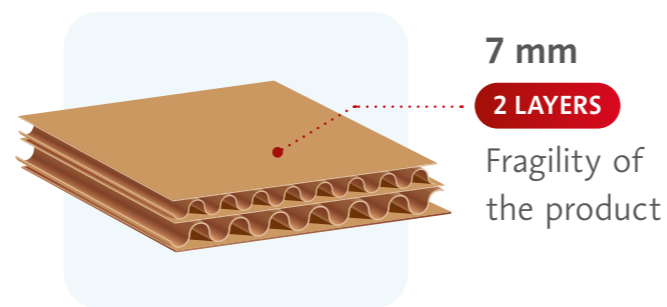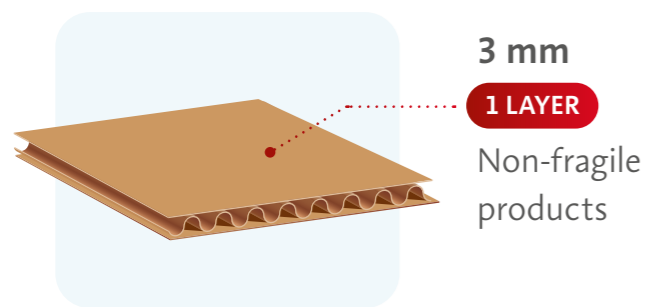1 **Choose the right box**

2 **Fill the box**

3 **Seal the box**

4 **Attach the shipping label**

Step 01 │ Choose the right box

Parcels are stacked, sorted by a machine and transferred multiple times.
So the packaging has to sufficiently protect the contents, particularly with heavy or fragile products.

Quality

The strength of cardboard is determined by the number of layers.
The more corrugated layers, the thicker the cardboard and the better it absorbs shocks and the more protection it offers.

3 mm

1 LAYER

Non-fragile
products

7 mm

2 LAYERS

Fragility of
the product

14 mm

3 LAYERS

Fragility of
the product

Sustainability

Whether you choose cardboard or plastic, with a few careful choices you can also make your packaging sustainable.

Recycled fibres

Choose packaging made of recycled material: 70% recycled material is perfectly feasible without compromising strength. If you choose new materials, ensure they have the FSC/PEFC label.

Reusable

Ensure your packaging is easy to reuse. There is a wide range of cardboard boxes and shipping bags with closures that can be reused.

Single material

Choose single-material packaging. Because all the packaging is made from a single material (e.g. plastic or cardboard), it's easier to recycle after use.

Measurements

When choosing a box, bear in mind the permitted dimensions*.

Delivery to the door or to a Pick-up point

Longest side: max. 1.5 m
Total: 1 x length + 2 x width
+ 2 x height = max. 3 m

Delivery to a Parcel Locker

Min. 14.5 x 11.2 cm
Max. 42.0 x 31.0 x 58.0 cm

Other suitable packaging

Of course, it's not only rectangular or square boxes that are permitted.
Depending on the product you are shipping, you can also choose one of these types of packaging.

Shipping bags

Padded envelopes

Letterbox cartons

Rolls

LENGTH
max. 1.5 m

DIAMETER
max. 40 cm

* For further details, consult the Masspost Guide and our general conditions. - ** Contractual clients may have to pay a surcharge if a parcel doesn't meet these requirements. - *** They can delay the processing of your parcels.
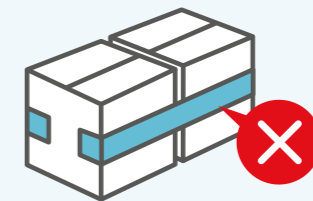
This is how you do it

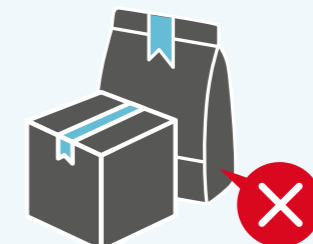Strong box in corrugated cardboard (preferably 2 layers)

Adapted to size and shape of the contents**

The heavier the contents, the stronger the box

Boxes should not be attached to one another

Avoid black film and (matte) black packaging***

Step 02 │ Fill the box

There is little sense in choosing a sturdy box if the product can move around inside and suffer damage.
To protect the product, you must fill all the empty space in the box.

Filler material

To secure your product in the box, you can choose from various sorts of filler material.

Filler paper

You can fold filler paper in the right shape around the product and it's easy to recycle. Score extra sustainability points for using scrap (recycled) cardboard or (news)paper.

Bubble wrap or air cushions

Bubble wrap and air cushions keep your package light. The downside is that they are less sustainable and harder to shape.
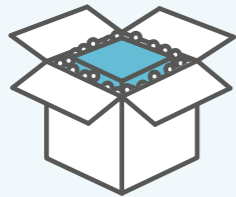
Foam

Foam sheets and chips are ideal for fragile products such as glass and electronics. They offer good cushioning and do not scratch. Downside: they are not sustainable.

This is how you do it

General

Avoid direct contact between the product and the box
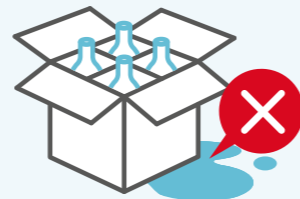
Fill all the empty space with filler material

Multiple products? Use dividers and/or wrap them separately

Extra guidelines for liquids

Choose plastic bottles over glass bottles

Use absorbent filler material in case of leaks

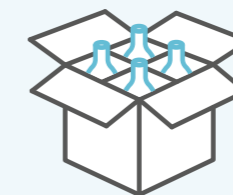Sticky liquids or fats? Seal them in a plastic bag before placing in the box

Extra guidelines for fragile products

Rule of thumb: volume of the packaging = 2 x volume of the object

Wrap fragile products securely

Multiple fragile products? Ensure they don't touch

Step 03 │ Seal the box

Seal the packaging so it is impossible to open without leaving traces.
There are several options for sealing the box.

Tape

You have the choice of PP and PVC tape. The thickness of the tape is indicated in microns.
The higher the number, the thicker and stronger the tape.

PP tape

PP tape is made of brown, white
or transparent polypropylene.
The tape is reasonably stiff:
if you prick it with a pen,
the tape will tear. PP tape
is usually cheaper than PVC
tape and is particularly
suitable for lighter parcels.

PVC tape

PVC tape is made from natural
rubber adhesive. The tape is
matt and a lot more elastic
than PP tape: if you prick a hole
in it with a pen, the tape will
not tear. This is a more suitable
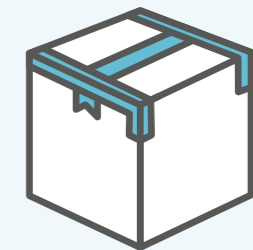choice for heavier packages.

Sealing strip

Another solution is to choose
packaging with an integrated
self-adhesive strip. Ideally,
you would choose two strips:
one for sealing the package
for shipping and one that
can be used for returns.

This is how you do it

Seal all the edges,
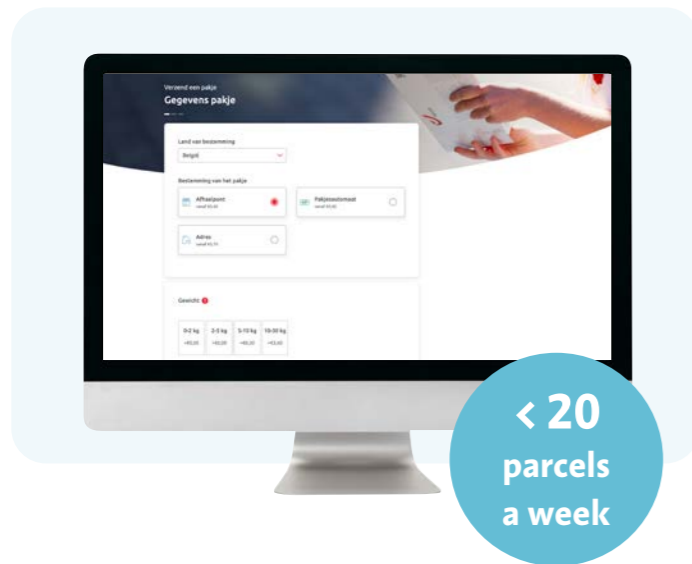including the sides
(the H method)

Use strong,
wide adhesive tape
(at least 48 mm)

Step 04 | Attach the shipping label

Last but not least: the shipping label. Our sorting machines can only process your parcels smoothly if this is correctly attached.
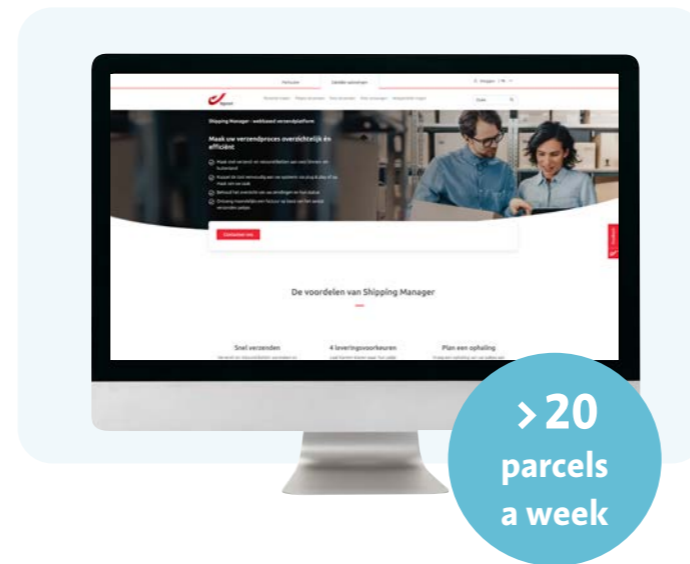
Create your shipping labels

bpost gives you two options for creating your shipping labels. Depending on how many parcels you are sending, you can choose either our online shipping tool or Shipping Manager

< 20 parcels a week

> 20 parcels a week

Online shipping tool

Do you send fewer than 20 parcels a week? Then you can quickly and easily create a shipping label manually via our online shipping tool. You pay a fixed price per parcel each time you create a label.
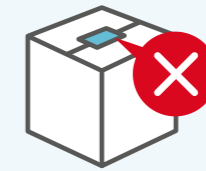
Shipping Manager

Do you send more than 20 parcels a week? With Shipping Manager you can automate shipping and returns for all the parcels in your webshop. You'll also enjoy contractual tariffs and monthly billing.
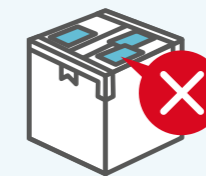
This is how you do it

On the largest side of the box, not across a join

Don't use the shipping label to seal the box

Ensure the shipping label is fully legible*

Make sure there is only one shipping label on the box

Contractual clients may have to pay a surcharge if a parcel doesn't meet these requirements.

Our services at a glance

Creating shipping labels

From the smallest webshop to the biggest business, bpost offers everyone a tailored shipping process. Either you automate your shipments in your webshop with **Shipping Manager**, or you create shipping labels manually with our **online shipping tool**.

Suitable boxes

Looking for the right box? You'll find boxes in various shapes that meet all the requirements in our **eShop** and in all **Post Offices, Parcel Points and Post Points**. They are ecological, made from recycled fibres and recyclable. If you have a contract with us and want to order more than 50 boxes in one go, use our **order form**.

Returns solutions

Webshops that don't offer good returns solutions miss out on customers. bpost offers you flexible and user-friendly returns solutions. Easy for you and your customers. **Discover our returns solutions**.

E-fulfilment

Stock management and preparation of parcels can take a lot of time. Let us take care of the logistics and administration of your orders. You can personalise your packaging and, thanks to our automatic packing machines, every products gets the right packaging, so as little space and material as possible are wasted. Contact your account manager or **read more about e-fulfilment** from our subsidiary Active Ants.

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**For more information and questions,
call 02 201 11 11 or see www.bpost.be**