

PREPARING YOUR ECOMMERCE PACKAGING FOR AMAZON

The Complete Guide to Amazon Frustration Free Packaging

AN ORORA EBOOK



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INTRODUCTION

Consumers want the best of both worlds – products shipped with the least amount of packaging material possible and protected from damage as they move through the supply chain to arrive safely on their doorsteps.

But ecommerce packaging doesn't meet this demand today. Too often, ecommerce packaging is just a retail-ready package stuffed inside a plain corrugated box like an Amazon box with some extra air pillows to cushion the blows the product might suffer during shipping. As a result, overpacking has become a substantial issue in the packaging industry and has created a focus around delivering a new packaging experience to the ecommerce consumer.

According to the US Commerce Department, ecommerce sales accounted for \$1.03 trillion or 21.2% of the total retail market in 2022, a new record. Of the total retail growth in 2022, ecommerce represented 23.8%.*

As such a dominant player in the ecommerce space, spurred on by its mission to be Customer Obsessed and its core value of ownership, Amazon set out over a decade ago to change the way its packaging and its sellers packaging impacted the environment by launching the Amazon Frustration Free Packaging initiative in 2008.

The program has eliminated over 1.5 million tons of packaging materials, avoided an equivalent use of 2 billion shipping boxes, and reduced overall packaging weight by over 38% per shipped unit.**

Since August of 2019, Amazon began charging its sellers \$1.99 for primary ASINs that did not meet Tier 1 or Tier 2 packaging guidelines. Additionally, since October of 2021, Amazon began providing vendors with financial incentives to receive Tier 1 or Tier 2 certifications, offering \$0.08–\$6.49 per unit depending on certification and total volume reduced from original packaging size.*** This financial incentive will remain until December 2023. In accordance with Amazon, we encourage you to take this opportunity to re-examine your entire packaging process in order to find new cost saving opportunities for your business and deliver a more sustainable packaging experience for your consumers.

The guidelines for the FFP program are extensive. This e-book is meant to help you better understand the requirements in order to make the challenge of packaging redesign a little less daunting. At Orora, we're delighted to see such a shift toward sustainable packaging and proud to partner with our customers who sell on Amazon to help them meet these guidelines. Let's get started.

*<https://www.amazowl.com/amazon-frustration-free-packaging-2/>

**<https://www.aboutamazon.com/planet/improving-packaging>

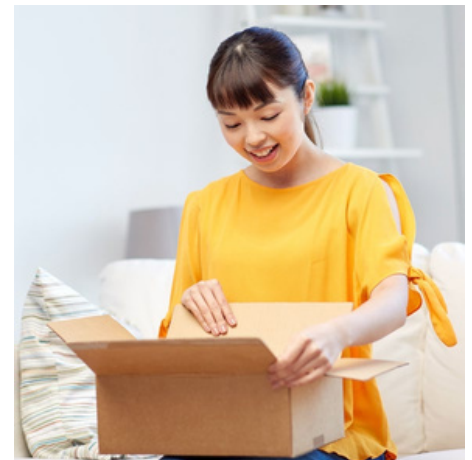
***<https://www.aboutamazon.com/planet/improving-packaging/incentive-program>

WHAT IS AMAZON FRUSTRATION FREE PACKAGING?

Amazon Frustration Free Packaging is a set of packaging regulations designed to reduce consumer frustration with packaging and to eliminate unnecessary packaging materials from the ecommerce supply chain. Since 2015, Amazon claims FFP has reduced packaging weight by 38% and prevented 1.5 million tons of packaging from being shipped through the supply chain.

Amazon's response to this consumer demand is to require FFP packaging that is:

- Designed to Reduce Waste by shipping without Amazon boxes
- Protective Against Damage to ensure product arrives safely without Amazon prep
- Easy to Open to create an optimal customer experience
- Made with 100% Recyclable Packaging to reduce the environmental impact
- In short, Amazon is trying to drive the industry toward protective, cost-effective, easy-to-open, low-waste packaging.



scope

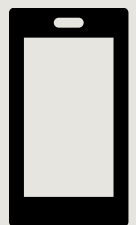
Amazon sellers received their lists of ASINs impacted by the chargeback in the fall of 2018. Since then, this chargeback fee has remained only for Non-Sortable ASINs that do not qualify for Tier 1 (FFP) or Tier 2 (SIPP).

Non-Sortable ASINs include products with the following measurements:

- packaging that exceeds at least one dimension of 18" 14" 18" threshold
- packaging that is or exceeds 20 lbs.

You will be required to test and certify each of your primary ASINs so that they can be categorized as Tier 1 – FFP or Tier 2 – SIPP. These products require no additional preparation from Amazon and are exempt from the chargeback. Non-Sortable products that are uncertified or categorized as Tier 3 are subject to the fee. HAZMAT classified products are the only specified exception; they cannot be classified as Tier 1 FFP or Tier 2 SIPP at this time.

Since 2009, Amazon has received more than 33 million comments and photos from their "packaging feedback program."



Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/16/science/recycling-cardboard-online-shopping-environment.html>

FFP TIERS AND QUALIFICATIONS



Note - The minimum package dimensions to participate in Tier 1 - FFP and Tier 2 - SIPP Amazon packaging certifications is 9"x6"x0.375". This communication focuses on Tier 1 - FFP and Tier 2 - SIPP for ASINs greater than 18"x14"x8".

Source: https://d39w7f4ix9f5s9.cloudfront.net/02/0e/39ebc27748578b6b316f7f81f573/amazon-frustration-free-packaging-program-certification-guidelines-v9.0_2018.pdf

TIER 1: FFP Frustration Free Packaging

- 100% recyclable material*
- Easy-to-open, minimal packaging
- ISTA -6 DIOC compliant
- No overbox or preparation from Amazon required
- Minimum size: 9" L x 6" W x 0.375"H

NO CHARGEBACK

TIER 2: SIPP Ships in Product Packaging

- Needs support material to prevent damage
- Ships in own packaging ISTA -6 DIOC compliant
- No overbox or preparation from Amazon required
- Minimum size: 9" L x 6" W x 0.375"H

NO CHARGEBACK

TIER 3: PFP Prep Free Packaging

- ISTA -6 DIOC compliant Amazon overbox required for shipping
- No Amazon prep required
- Maximum Size: 9" L x 6" W x 0.375"H

CHARGEBACK

chargeback details

Amazon charges a **\$1.99 chargeback** on each unit sold and shipped by Amazon for any package **larger than 18"x14"x8"** and/or **weighing 20 pounds or more** that is not a Tier 1 or Tier 2 qualified primary ASIN.

PACKAGE FOR PURPOSE

Traditionally, sellers have used the same packaging for retail shelves and ecommerce. However, the rise in consumer demand for sustainable packaging and the growing convenience of ecommerce has spurred a renewed focus on how these items are delivered to the customer.

Amazon's regulations mean that in order to optimize costs, Amazon sellers need to design packaging for the purpose it serves. In other words, create different packaging designs for products being sold on the retail shelves versus the e-commerce channel. Design your packaging for how it will flow through the supply chain from the get-go in order to optimize production, cost savings, and user experience.

creating FFP-compliant packaging

In order to create FFP-compliant packaging, you will need to focus on meeting requirements in 3 key areas:



OLD PACKAGING



FFP-COMPLIANT

DESIGN

design for the consumer, the environment, and your operations

The benefits of redesigning packaging for the products you sell on Amazon are numerous. As you begin to re-evaluate your existing retail packaging for more ecommerce-friendly options, you may be pleased to discover that you can:

- Improve your branding by drawing attention to your more sustainable packaging
- Find new cost savings by "rightsizing" your packaging around the product, thereby reducing waste and erroneous shipping costs from dimensional weight shipping
- Enhance the consumer experience by eliminating "wrap rage" and creating an easy-to-open, more user-friendly design
- Increase sales by meeting the expectations of environmentally-conscious consumers

120 
Seconds

What qualifies as easy-to-open packaging?

- Minimal use of scissors or cutters
- No blister packs, plastic inserts, packaging peanuts, shredded paper or welded clamshells
- Able to remove product from packaging in less than 120 seconds



product to package ratio

Another requirement of Frustration Free Packaging is that the design meets the required ratio of the volume of the product to the total volume of the packaging. Amazon defines this as:

- Fragile Products: score must be >30%
- Non-fragile Products: scores must be >50%

	Length	Width	Height	Total Volume
Product Measurements	20"	9"	6"	1080"
Packaging Measurements	22"	10"	8"	1760"
	Packaging Utilization Score			1080/1760 = 61%

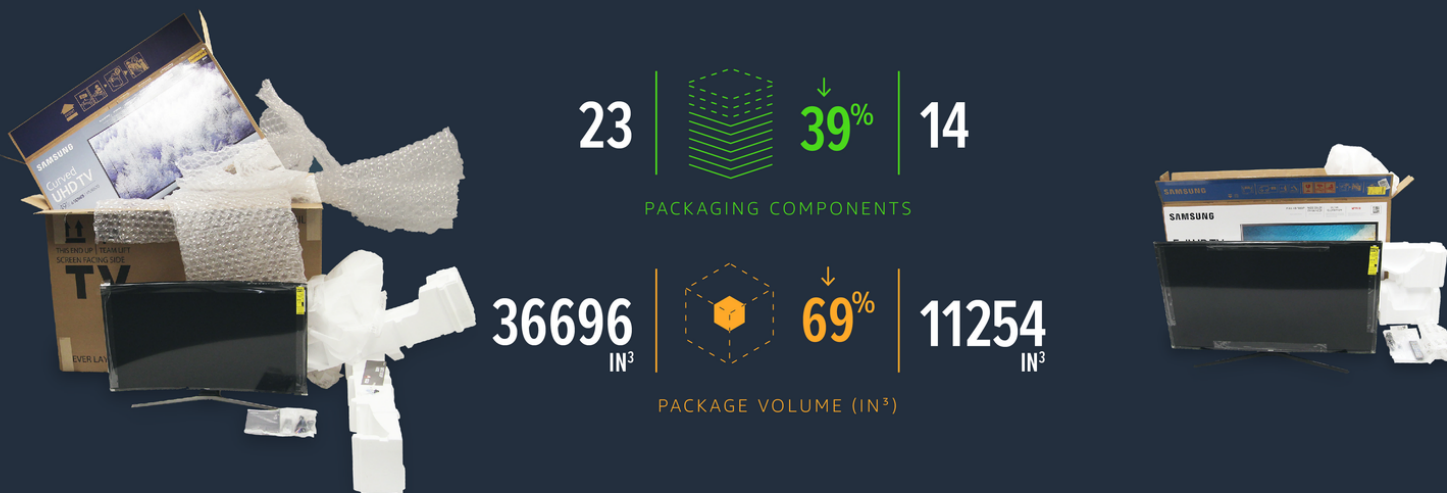
Samsung 49" Series 5 TV

Unboxing Experience and Waste Metrics

STANDARD

VS

TIER 2: SIOC (SHIPS-IN-OWN-CONTAINER)



Source: Amazon.com

recommended materials

Amazon also sets recommendations for packaging materials to use in order to meet FFP guidelines. These are:

- **Rigid 6-sided rectangular corrugated (Best)**
 - capable of surviving single parcel delivery network or LTL shipping
 - pass the ISTA-6 Amazon SIPP test
 - No protrusions, windows or cutouts
 - Hand holes ok but not larger than 3"x1.5" with 1.5" radius
- Padded mailers or rigid envelopes
- May only use plastic films with SPI codes 2 and 4 when abrasion and dust protection required
- Silica gel, and flexible or barrier films/bags used to maintain quality and freshness are also acceptable alternatives

prohibited materials

Amazon prohibits the following packaging because they are some of the most unsustainable and frustrating for consumers to open:

- Clamshells
- Wire Ties or Twist Ties
- Poly Bags
- Staples
- No bundling of multiple packages

additional design standards

FFP guidelines also allow for these design options:

- Locking tabs sealed with glue or tape
- Non-metal straps or bands that fit tightly around oversized products
- Printing and labeling should:
 - Indicate contents
 - Explain handling instructions
 - Follow requirements as outlined in the Vendor shipment manual on Vendor Central

TESTING

What testing is required?

- The Amazon ISTA 6 SIPP test is required
- It includes free-fall drop testing and vibration testing to simulate the supply chain demand test for potential damage

Where can testing be done?

- At any APASS lab or ISTA certified facility that can conduct the Amazon test
- Click [here](#) to find an ISTA facility to conduct your testing



Consumer Demand for Sustainable Packaging

The 2023 Buying Green report surveyed over 9,000 consumers across Europe, North America, and South America. The survey found that:

- 66% of respondents consider themselves to be environmentally aware consumers
- 82% of respondents would be willing to pay more for sustainable packaging
- 59% of respondents look for information on the recyclability or sustainability of the packaging on products they buy

Source: 2023 Buying Green Report, Trivium Packaging

CERTIFICATION

how to certify your frustration free packaging

Once you redesign and test your new packaging, you need to provide proof so that Amazon can certify it as Frustration Free. This step is done directly with Amazon through the Vendor Central portal.

To provide proof and to certify your new packaging designs as FFP or SIPP:

1. Visit Vendor Central
2. Select Support, then Contact Us
3. Select your business group
4. Find the Amazon Packaging Certification support topic
5. Submit the ASINs enrollment form and a completed ISTA6 packaging test report for each primary ASIN



Remember, certification is meant to be final. Amazon will immediately classify your items, so if your packaging is not yet ready to ship to Amazon Fulfillment Centers, do not enroll your items. Otherwise, you could become decertified and you will have to retest and recertify your packaging all over again.

Once certified, your product detail page will show:

Ships from and sold by
Amazon.com in **easy-to-open**
packaging.

Item arrives in packaging that
reveals what's inside. To hide it,
choose **Ship in Amazon**
packaging at checkout.

Source: Amazon.com

HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

For more information on Amazon's Frustration Free Packaging program, explore the following resources:

[Amazon FFP Site](#)

[Certification](#)
[Guidelines](#)

DIFFERENTIATE

Amazon recommends products be shipped in rigid, 6-sided, rectangular containers (aka corrugated). But when much of your brand experience depends on packaging in ecommerce, how can you differentiate?

inside the box printing

Since the outside of the corrugated box must meet so many design guidelines (see pages 7-8 of this guide for details), you may find yourself limited as to how you can distinguish your product from other Amazon sellers.

With inside the box printing, you can introduce 6-color printing options, add brand statements and logos, and create a unique experience of your brand for the consumer.



return-ready packaging

More than 30% of ecommerce items get returned, and consumer demand for easy, free returns is rising. Take the opportunity to ensure your new ecommerce packaging design complies with FFP requirements and makes returns easier.

Use self-seal mailers for example or consider Orora Seal™ corrugated boxes that feature 2 strips of tear tape to account for a proper product-to-package ratio and a hassle-free returns process.

Creating a return-ready design will also reduce the amount of packaging material used in the returns process, thereby reducing overpacking and costs.

emphasize sustainability

Demonstrate your dedication to the environment and draw attention to the use of sustainable packaging materials. Take it one step further and use water-based inks in your films and plastic packaging to really broadcast your sustainability factor.



When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Yes, Amazon issues a chargeback for non-compliant packaging. Take the opportunity to re-evaluate your entire packaging process and find ways to increase your sales and enhance the consumer's experience.

If all of this seems daunting, however, don't fret. Rather than reinvent the wheel, you can easily partner with a total packaging solutions provider, like Orora, to meet Amazon's requirements. Orora has the expertise, testing facilities, packaging materials and equipment you need to easily create new packaging designs that optimize your costs and reduce your environmental impact without sacrificing superior protection or the consumer experience

Get started on redesigning, testing and certifying your Amazon packaging today.



Leading the transition to a more sustainably packaged future.



www.ororapackaging.com