

## Packing & Crating Guide – Basic Best Practices – Sterdts

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### About this guide

This guide explains **practical packing and crating basics** for international moves and freight handled by Sterdts (Pty) Ltd. It is a **general guide**, not a technical standard or legal document. It does **not** replace:

- Carrier and container requirements
- Sterdts' operational instructions
- Any insurance, customs or regulatory rules that apply to your shipment

For anything unusual, high-value or high-risk, please ask your Sterdts consultant for route- and cargo-specific advice.

### 1. Your role vs Sterdts' role

Before packing starts, agree who does what:

- **Sterdts typically handles:**
  - Export-standard wrapping and packing for international moves
  - Professional packing of fragile and high-value items
  - Crating design and supply for items needing extra protection
  - Container loading (where Sterdts is contracted to do so)
- **You (the client) typically handle:**
  - Deciding what to ship vs sell/donate/store
  - Separating and clearly marking "do not pack" items
  - Preparing items as agreed (e.g. emptying cupboards, defrosting fridges, cleaning outdoor items)
  - Packing some non-fragile personal items yourself, if a partial or self-pack option is chosen

If you are unsure whether something should be packed by Sterdts or by you **ask your Sterdts consultant** before move day so we can agree on the safest and most practical approach.

### 2. General packing principles

Whether you or Sterdts does the packing, the following principles apply:

- **Protect against shocks, vibration and compression**
  - Assume your goods will be handled multiple times and may be stacked.
  - Use enough padding and strong cartons or crates to withstand normal handling and stacking forces.
- **Avoid empty space**
  - Fill gaps in cartons with suitable materials (paper, bubble-wrap, foam, etc.) to stop items moving.
  - Partly filled cartons crush more easily and allow contents to shift.
- **Use the right carton for the job**
  - Heavy items (books, tools) in **small, strong cartons**.

- Light, bulky items (bedding, clothing) in **larger cartons**.
- Wardrobe cartons for hanging clothing if used.
- **Heavy items at the bottom**
  - Place heavier items at the bottom of the carton, lighter items on top.
  - Avoid overloading; a carton should be comfortable for safe manual handling.
- **Protect sharp edges and corners**
  - Cover sharp corners and edges with card or padding to reduce damage to other items and packaging.
- **Close and seal cartons properly**
  - Use strong tape on all seams (especially the bottom).
  - Avoid tying cartons with string only – tape is generally safer and easier to handle.

### 3. What you should NOT pack

For safety, insurance and customs reasons, some items should **not** go into normal household goods cartons or containers. Always discuss these with Sterdts:

- **No flammables or hazardous substances**
  - Petrol, diesel, gas cylinders, firelighters, thinners, paints, oils, solvents, aerosols and similar items.
  - Some cleaning products and chemicals may also be restricted.
- **No perishable food**
  - Fresh food, open containers, easily perishable items and anything likely to leak or spoil.
- **No illegal or restricted goods**
  - Illegal substances, weapons, certain medicines or other items prohibited by law.
  - Items requiring special permits should not be packed without prior approval and documentation.
- **Avoid packing cash, jewellery and irreplaceable documents**
  - Passports, ID documents, financial records, cash and high-value jewellery should be kept with you personally, not shipped in cartons.

If in doubt about an item:

- **Do not pack it** until you have checked with Sterdts whether it is allowed and how it should travel.

### 4. Room-by-room practical tips (household goods)

These tips apply mostly to **international household moves**.

#### Kitchen

- Use strong, medium-sized cartons for crockery, glassware and small appliances
- Wrap plates individually and pack on their edge rather than flat where practical
- Wrap glasses and cups individually and place upright, filling gaps with paper
- Use plenty of padding at the bottom and top of cartons

- Empty and clean appliances; secure or remove loose parts where possible

### Living & dining areas

- Remove and pack loose shelves and glass panels separately where possible
- Protect picture frames, mirrors and glass surfaces with padded wrapping and cardboard
- Group smaller decorative items together in well-padded cartons
- Note any high-value art or antiques for special packing and/or crating

### Bedrooms

- Use wardrobe cartons for hanging garments if required
- Fold and pack clothing in suitcases or cartons (not overfilled)
- Ensure beds and large furniture are disassembled by Sterdts where agreed
- Remove batteries from devices where possible

### Study / office

- Back up important data before moving computers or drives
- Pack computers and electronics in original packaging where available, or in well-padded cartons
- Keep critical work documents or devices with you where possible

### Garage & outdoor

- Drain fuel from lawnmowers, trimmers and similar equipment
- Clean garden tools and outdoor items to remove soil and debris (some countries are strict on contamination)
- Pack tools securely, especially sharp items (blades, saws) with protective covers
- Use strong cartons or crates for heavy tool boxes and equipment

## 5. When is crating recommended?

Some items are best protected with **custom wooden crates** or reinforced cases. Crating is typically recommended for:

- Large or valuable **artworks and mirrors** (especially glass and framed pieces)
- Sculptures, antiques and fragile decorative items that are awkward to pack in cartons
- Pianos and certain musical instruments
- Large glass table tops and high-value furniture with vulnerable surfaces
- Specialist equipment and machinery that needs extra support and protection

### Crating is designed to:

- Provide rigid, structural protection around the item
- Allow the item to be handled as a single unit
- Reduce the risk of crushing, impact or concentrated pressure during transit

If you are unsure whether crating is needed, Sterdts can assess your items during the survey.

## 6. Basic crating best practices (Sterdts-controlled)

Where Sterdts arranges crating, we will follow sensible best practices such as:

- **Correct measurements and design**
  - Measuring the item and any necessary padding or supports
  - Allowing enough internal clearance for protective materials without excessive movement
- **Suitable materials**
  - Using appropriate timber and cladding materials, taking into account route and destination requirements (e.g. ISPM-15 where required for wood packaging)
  - Ensuring all fasteners and fittings are suited to export conditions
- **Internal support and cushioning**
  - Providing adequate internal padding, blocking and bracing to:
    - Protect fragile surfaces
    - Avoid direct contact with crate walls where needed
    - Prevent internal movement
- **Marking and handling instructions**
  - Marking crates clearly with "FRAGILE", "THIS WAY UP", centre-of-gravity indicators and any other necessary handling marks
  - Ensuring marks are visible from relevant sides for depots and carriers

**As the client, your main role is to:**

- Highlight items that may need special protection; and
- Approve crating where suggested by Sterdts before the move.

## 7. Labelling, inventories & checklists

Good labelling and inventories help with **delivery, customs and insurance**:

- **Labelling**
  - Each carton or crate should have:
    - A clear **label** with room/area (e.g. "Kitchen", "Main Bedroom")
    - A unique carton/crate number
  - High-value or sensitive items may have additional internal labelling for reference in the inventory.
- **Inventory**
  - Sterdts will normally compile a packing list or inventory for international moves.
  - You should:
    - Review the inventory for general accuracy
    - Keep a copy for your records and for insurance purposes
- **Checklists**
  - Keep your own quick checklist (for example, ensuring:
    - All key items are loaded
    - "Do not pack" items remain with you
    - Items identified for crating have been treated as agreed)

## 8. Special considerations for commercial freight

If you are packing cargo for **commercial sea or air freight**, some additional points apply:

- **Stacking and stability**
  - Pallets and crates must be stackable and stable; avoid overhanging or loose loads
  - Use banding, shrink-wrap and corner protectors where appropriate
- **Weight distribution**
  - Avoid concentrating too much weight in one area of a pallet or crate
  - Respect pallet weight limits and any equipment limitations
- **Compliance marks**
  - Ensure any required compliance marks (e.g. ISPM-15 stamp on wooden packaging) are present and visible
  - Apply any regulatory or destination-specific marks required by your industry
- **Hazardous goods**
  - Dangerous goods must be packed and labelled in full compliance with relevant regulations (IMDG, IATA, etc.)
  - Discuss any DG cargo with Sterdts before packing.

## 9. How to use this guide

You can use this guide in three ways:

1. **Before the survey / quotation**
  - To identify items that may need special packing or crating
  - To prepare questions for your Sterdts consultant
2. **Before packing starts**
  - To separate “do not pack” items and restricted items
  - To decide what you will pack yourself vs what Sterdts should pack
3. **On packing day**
  - As a quick reminder of priorities:
    - Safety
    - Protection of fragile and high-value items
    - Clear labelling and inventory

Whenever you are unsure, rather raise the question with the Sterdts team on site or your consultant beforehand.

This guide is intended to support safe and sensible packing and crating, but it does **not** replace professional advice, technical standards, carrier requirements or our [Standard Trading Conditions \(STCs\)](#). For unusual or high-value items, please ask Sterdts for specific guidance.

## Contact details

For questions about packing, crating or how to prepare specific items:



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