



## HOME DELIVERY – PACKAGING STANDARD FOR RETURNS

This document outlines required packaging for Neiman Marcus Direct (NMD) returns through a Home Delivery freight carrier. These standards cover both 'white glove' and 'threshold' carriers. The expectation is that regardless of the condition of the merchandise, it is to be packed per the attached standards (at a minimum) for return to a NMD facility or vendor.

### **MINIMUM STANDARDS**

- These are minimum standards only. These packaging standards do not release the carrier from responsibility for damage.
- Remember – once the item is moving through the transportation network, it may bear weight on any side, and may have other freight stacked upon it. In addition to these standards, care should be used to pack freight in such a way that it can survive normal vibration and stacking.
- Prior to repackaging the item, the carrier must inspect it thoroughly and notate any pre-existing damage on the waybill. If the shipment to be returned is in the original box, the carrier must open the carton to inspect the condition of the item and whether it has appropriate dunnage.

### **PACKAGING SCENARIOS USED IN THIS STANDARD**

This document will present three possible repackaging scenarios for each merchandise category. They are:

1. **No materials.** The customer is unable to provide any packaging materials upon pickup of the merchandise. The carrier will be expected to repack the item in order to adequately protect it during transit.
2. **Limited materials.** An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the carrier's station, yet limited or no original inner packaging is available to protect the merchandise. The carrier will be expected to repack the item as above, and insert it in the box on hand for further protection.
3. **Original packaging.** The original item packaging is 100% in-tact. The carrier is still responsible for inspecting the item and how it is packed.

### **PRE-CALL RESPONSIBILITIES**

During the scheduling pre-call, the carrier should conduct an assessment of the packaging materials in the NMD customer's possession. When the NMD customer (shipper) indicates that all or some of the original packaging exists, the NMD customer should be instructed to not seal the carton. This will allow the carrier to easily inspect the item and the inner packaging. Prior to return shipment, the carrier is then expected to:

1. Note any pre-existing damage on the waybill.
2. Improve the inner packaging when necessary.
3. Seal the carton.

### **BASIC SUPPLIES NEEDED**

This standard is presented assuming the carrier to have access to basic supplies for repack. In the event additional supplies are available (e.g. corrugated box materials) they should be used to improve the overall returns packaging. Basic supplies include but are not limited to:

- Cellophane shrink-wrap
- Brown craft paper or micro-foam
- 2-ply corrugated corner and edge protection
- Bubble wrap
- 6 ml poly bags for shipping rugs

## **MERCHANDISE CATEGORIES**

As needs differ for various types of freight, detailed repackaging standards are provided for different merchandise categories below. For each category, standards are provided for 1) no materials, 2) limited materials, 3) original packaging.

### **Detailed Standard for Repackaging Case Goods**

#### **1. Case Goods – No materials**

- Basic packaging standard

Hardware protection – knobs or pulls must be inverted, removed or adequately wrapped (see below) to prevent vibration damage to the item during transit. In the event of a rounded surface, inverting may not be possible. If removed, loose hardware must be wrapped or bagged and secured in a drawer if available, or taped to the inside or bottom of the unit.



*photo: basic hardware protection – handles wrapped with micro-foam*

Under-layer – Item is to be wrapped in cellophane shrink-wrap, micro-foam or brown craft paper for protection of the finish. *Newsprint may not be used.*



*photo: cellophane shrink-wrap under layer*

Edge / corner protection – all corners and edges must be protected with 2-ply cardboard corner guards and edge protection (see photo below)



*photo: edge protection applied*

Bubble wrap – entire piece must be bubble-wrapped over the corner and edge protection. Thickness of the bubble wrap must be adequate for the size and weight of the item.



*photo: bubble-wrap layer applied*

Over-wrap – entire ‘assembly’ (including legs) must be over-wrapped with a second layer of the cellophane shrink-wrap. Once the bubble wrap and over-wrap layers are completed, there should be no loose or moving parts – e.g. drawers, shelves. All corner and edge protection must also be secure.



*photo: over-layer of cellophane shrink-wrap*

- Drawers – perimeter drawers should be secured by the wrapping process described above. Internal drawers (e.g. inside an armoire) must be secured by the best means available – spacers, foam protection, or removing them and wrapping them separately. If they are removed, the drawer(s) must be stored inside the main unit for shipping. Drawers may not be taped.
- Legs – remove legs when possible and wrap in bubble. If unable to remove legs, each leg must be entirely wrapped in bubble. In this case, the ‘over-wrap’ step described above must include legs. If the shipment is to be palletized, case goods with legs must be staged on cardboard of sufficient thickness to support the weight of the item during transit. Also, use judgment in considering shipping the item upside down.



*photo: edge protection applied to table legs and over-wrapped*

- Glass – glass built into an item must be taped using masking tape in case of breakage. Note: labels indicating ‘glass’ and ‘truck from this side’ must be affixed to items using glass as part of the outer case.



*photo: glass taped*

- Shelves – loose (not permanently attached to the unit with screws or glue) wooden shelves must be individually wrapped in either Kraft paper or bubble wrap and placed inside the unit for shipping. Loose glass shelves must be wrapped in bubble wrap placed inside the unit for shipping.



*photo: completed armoire*

## 2. Case Goods – Limited Materials

- An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the carrier’s station, but some or all of the dunnage is missing.
- The carrier will be expected to repack the item as above (‘no materials’ option), and insert it in the available box for further protection.

- Note: deluxing agents may have access to carton material as boxes removed for other deliveries become available.

3. Case Goods – Original Packaging

- The carrier must inspect the item and note any pre-existing damage.
- The carrier must inspect the packaging to ensure its integrity.

**Detailed Standard for Repackaging Upholstery**

1. Upholstery – No Materials

- Basic packaging standard

General handling notes – for proper handling, sofas and loveseats should be bagged or blanket-wrapped and transported in an upright position (see photo). Smaller upholstered items may be boxed. This may or may not be palletized, depending on the transportation network.

Bag option – the preferred option for upholstered items, particularly large items such as sofas, loveseats, or large chairs. For bagged items, bubble-wrapping legs is advised for added protection, but not required. A tray of appropriate strength cardboard may be used to aid in handling.



*photo: sofa bagged for shipping*

Boxed option – the preferred option for mid-sized upholstered furniture (e.g. stuffed armchairs, tub chairs, etc). An appropriate strength and sized box must be used. Boxed furniture must be wrapped in protective material (do not shrink-wrap as this can leave marks) inside the box. Fill voids with dunnage such as large bubble or paper.

Other – smaller framed / upholstered items (e.g. chairs, benches, stools) must be thoroughly wrapped in a protective material such as cellophane shrink wrap. However, care must be used to prevent damage to the upholstered finish (e.g. leather or fabric). Legs and arms must be bubble-wrapped. This category may be successfully transported using a variety of methods – pallets, trays, stacking. If a pallet is used the item must be staged on cardboard of sufficient thickness (to prevent pallet damage to the legs) and strapped to the pallet. Best judgment must be used to avoid damage while transporting the item(s) through the carriers' system.



*photo: chair bagged*

**2. Upholstery – Limited Materials**

- An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the carrier's station, but some or all of the dunnage is missing.
- The carrier will be expected to repackage the item as above ('no materials' option), and insert it in the available box for further protection.
- Note: deluxing agents may have access to carton material as boxes for deliveries are removed.

**3. Upholstery – Original Packaging**

- The carrier must inspect the item and note any pre-existing damage.
- The carrier must inspect the packaging to ensure its integrity.

**Detailed Standard for Repackaging Beds**

**1. Beds – No Materials**

- Basic packaging standard

Beds are typically shipped as multiple boxes. Each piece must be thoroughly protected. Separate boxes must be clearly labeled with on-lot quantities (1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3) and NMD order / reference number in order to easily identify all boxes of the shipment.

Hardware – e.g. screws, must be retained, wrapped and included in one of the boxes, preferably inserted with the rails.

Attachments – e.g. crowns, finials, posts that are not permanently affixed must be detached for safe transit. They must be wrapped (per instructions below) and may be packed separately or inserted inside one of the other boxes.



*photo: remove bedposts and wrap separately*

Under-layer – Item is to be wrapped in cellophane shrink-wrap, micro-foam or brown Kraft paper for protection of the finish. *Newsprint may not be used.*

Edge / corner protection – where the shape of the bed allows, corners and edges must be protected with 2-ply cardboard corner guards and edge protection.

Bubble wrap – entire piece must be bubble-wrapped over the corner and edge protection (if used). Thickness of the bubble wrap must be adequate for the size and weight of the item.

Legs & Bedposts – must be thoroughly wrapped for protection.

Over-wrap – entire ‘assembly’ must be over-wrapped with a second layer of the shrink-wrap.

## 2. Beds – Limited Materials

- An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the carrier’s station, but some or all of the dunnage is missing.
- The carrier will be expected to repack the item as above (‘no materials’ option), and insert it in the available box for further protection.
- Note: deluxing agents may have access to carton material as boxes for deliveries are removed.

## 3. Beds – Original Packaging

- The carrier must inspect the item and note any pre-existing damage.
- The carrier must inspect the packaging to ensure its integrity.

### Detailed Standard for Repackaging Mirrors / Wall Décor

#### 1. Mirrors / Wall Décor – No Materials

- Framed mirrors / wall décor is an extremely difficult category to move in a freight environment and every effort should be made to obtain or build an appropriate-sized and strength corrugated box using available materials. In the event there is no dunnage, protective steps described below must be completed in addition to the improvised box.
- Basic Packaging standard.

Spacers – packing material functioning as spacer(s) should be placed in the center of the item to prevent direct pressure on the glass or collapse of the outer layer. Material must be shock absorbent.



*photo: mirror with bubble wrap and protective inner layer (spacer)*

Under-layer – the item should be wrapped in bubble wrap, cellophane shrink-wrap or brown Kraft paper for protection of the finish. *Newsprint may not be used.*

Edge / corner protection – where the shape of the frame allows, corners and edges must be protected with 2-ply cardboard corner guards and edge protection.

- Bubble wrap – If appropriate inner layer (as shown in the preceding photograph) is not available, the entire piece must be bubble-wrapped over the corner and edge protection (if used). Recommended thickness of the bubble wrap is 3 inches on all sides. Thickness must be adequate for the size and weight of the item.
- 'Glass' labels must be affixed to the item upon completion of the wrapping process.
  - Warning: experience has shown this type of freight does not endure well in a freight environment with other cartons stacked on top of it. Mirrors / wall décor packed in this manner must not be transported flat and on or near the bottom of a pallet with other freight stacked on top of it.
2. Mirrors / Wall Décor – Limited Materials
- An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the DA's station, but some or all of the dunnage is missing.
  - The carrier will be expected to repack the item as above ('no materials' option), and insert it in the available box for further protection.
  - Note: deluxing agents may have access to carton material as boxes for deliveries are removed.
3. Mirrors / Wall Décor – Original Packaging
- The carrier must inspect the item and note any pre-existing damage.
  - The carrier must inspect the packaging to ensure its integrity.

#### **Detailed Standard for Repackaging Rugs**

1. Rugs – No Materials
- The carrier must inspect the rug and note any pre-existing damage.
  - Do not allow tape, twine, wire, etc. to make direct contact with the rug – front or back.
  - Rugs must be rolled and packed in a poly bag (6 mil thickness) and ends sealed. A 20 inch tube may be purchased in a roll and cut to length. Suggested resources for this product are: ULINE Shipping Supply Specialists - [http://www.uline.com/Browse\\_Listing\\_2103.asp?keywords=poly+tube](http://www.uline.com/Browse_Listing_2103.asp?keywords=poly+tube) or Budget Box Co. - <http://www.budgetbox.com/price.htm>



*photo: 6 mil rug bags with taped or zip-locked ends*

2. Rugs – Limited Materials
- Does not apply to rugs.
3. Rugs – Original Packaging
- Original bag must be in good condition without holes, tears, etc.
  - The carrier must inspect the rug and note any pre-existing damage.

## Repackaging Miscellaneous Items

### 1. Miscellaneous – No Materials

- Neiman Marcus Direct offers a large number of home décor and garden items that are not only difficult to define in a specific standard, but are also difficult to transport.



NMD recommends that every effort should be made to obtain or build an appropriate-sized and strength corrugated box using available materials. Because there is so much variety and no standard features or shape for this type of merchandise, detailed standards are not possible. However, fundamental requirements / recommendations are provided below.

- Basic Packaging Recommendations.

Voids – all inner voids must be filled with dunnage. Care should be used to wrap handles, legs, or other ‘appendages’ with protective wrap.

Under-layer – If the finish is such that a ‘protective’ layer is needed, wrap the item in cellophane shrink-wrap or brown Kraft paper for protection of the finish. *Newsprint may not be used.*

Edge / corner protection – where the shape of the item allows, corners and edges must be protected with 2-ply cardboard corner guards and edge protection.

Bubble wrap – entire piece must be bubble-wrapped over the corner and edge protection (if used). Thickness must be adequate for the size and weight of the item.

- ‘Fragile’ labels should be used when appropriate.
- Home décor items packed in this manner may be palletized. If a pallet is used the item must be staged on cardboard of sufficient thickness (to prevent pallet damage to the legs) and strapped to the pallet with protection to prevent the straps from harming the finish of the item. Cellophane shrink-wrap may be used.
- This packaging method may not be sufficient for shipment in a freight environment with other freight stacked on top of it.

### 2. Miscellaneous – Limited Materials

- An appropriate size and strength box is available from either the customer or at the DA’s station, but some or all of the dunnage is missing.
- The carrier will be expected to repack the item as above (‘no materials’ option), and insert it in the available box for further protection.
- Note: deluxing agents may have access to carton material as boxes for deliveries are removed.

3. Miscellaneous – Original Packaging
  - The carrier must inspect the item and note any pre-existing damage.
  - The carrier must inspect the packaging to ensure its integrity.

### **Repacking Standards for Mattresses**

1. Unopened mattresses (original vendor packaging) refused or cancelled by the consignee may be returned to NMD. Contact 800-649-5429 for instructions.
2. All other mattress (opened or used) returns must be destroyed in the field. NMD must be notified prior to any action being taken. Contact 800-649-5429 for instructions. Note: used mattresses must be bagged during transport.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **Corrugated Boxes**

Corrugated boxes are not always available for return shipment. However, to aid you when corrugated boxes are available, please consider the following guidelines:

- The National Motor Freight Classification (NMFC) Item 222 provides specific standards for corrugated fiberboard boxes, including 'Bursting Strength' and 'Edge Crush Test Strength'. A copy of the NMFC may be obtained through the National Motor Freight Traffic Association at <http://www.nmfta.org/NatlMotorFreightClassification/tabid/110/Default.aspx>

### **Labeling Requirements**

Special handling instructions (i.e. 'Fragile', 'Glass' or directional arrows) must be used to assist in handling the freight through the network. However, the use of these warning signs does not supplant the packaging requirements outlined in this document. Examples of typical labeling or special handling instructions:

- Directional arrows or 'This End Up'
- 'Truck From This Side' (e.g. for items with glass doors)
- Glass
- 'Do Not Double Stack' or 'Top Load Only'
- Fragile
- On-lot marking (1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3) for multiple-piece freight e.g. beds, or two-piece armoires.

### **Handling**

- Pallets –
  - Merchandise palletized for transport must be strapped to the pallet.
  - A corrugated tray or flat sheet must be placed underneath the freight to protect the base or legs.
  - Legs must be adequately (completely) wrapped to protect them from damage. Shifting may cause legs to punch through slats on a pallet.
- Handling equipment
  - Network handling equipment must be considered when packing for return shipment. Hand trucks, pallet jacks, fork lifts, or squeeze trucks may be used to move freight.

## **Resources**

### **NMD Contacts:**

- Sheema Clement  
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Packaging Supervisor, NMD  
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- Lori Holyfield  
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Transportation Manager, NMD  
(972) 401-6851
- Mike Anderson  
[mike\\_anderson@neimanmarcus.com](mailto:mike_anderson@neimanmarcus.com)  
Director of Operations, NMD  
(972) 401-6455

### **Packaging Information:**

- National Motor Freight Traffic Association  
<http://www.nmfta.org/>
- International Safe Transit Association  
<http://www.ista.org/>

### **Packaging Supply Vendors:**

- Multi-Wall Packaging Corporation  
<http://www.multiwall.com/>
- PrimeChoice Packaging LLC  
<http://www.primechoicepkg.com/>
- ULINE Shipping Supply Specialists  
<http://www.uline.com/>
- Budget Box Co.  
<http://www.budgetbox.com/>

Note: the above list of supply vendors is only provided as an aid. You are free to use any supply vendor you chose, as long as the packing materials meet the general specifications described in this document.