**Getting Packaged Beer to Competition**

You’ve got your beer in bottles or cans, how do you get it to the competition?

**Before Boxing Your Entries**

Measure

* Measure the dimensions of the box and weigh all contents of the box, beer and packaging material, using a scale (hop scales can work if you measure things individually)

Select a carrier

* Shipping via USPS is technically illegal. Private carriers like UPS or Fedex usually have policies against shipping alcohol, but it’s not illegal.

Generating a label

* Always generate your label online. Consider the shipping arrival window. After putting in the Shipping From and Shipping To information, make sure you know when the beer will arrive.
* Print shipping and entry labels and attach entry labels to bottles/cans using a rubber band only! Consider placing entry labels in ziplock bags then attaching to bottles

**Boxing up Bottles**

* Get a box. Make sure the box is appropriately sized; don’t want the box too big or small. A 12 x 12 x 12 box will fit 16 12oz bottles.
* Wrap each bottle with a single sheet of [small bubble wrap](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B0722VNVDC/ref=ppx_yo_dt_b_search_asin_title?ie=UTF8&th=1) and slide the bottles in a four or six pack carrier. This will make the bottles act as a single unit that moves together. If any glass touches other glass, IT WILL BREAK.
* There should be no movement inside the box. Any empty space should be filled with filler (crumpled paper, small or medium bubble wrap; check your recycling bin for anything you can stuff in there). Stay away from large bubble wrap.
* Close the box, it should pop back open. That will tell you there is enough filler in the box
* Assume the worst for the box; it will be tossed, flipped, and dropped.
* Do (or consider) the drop test. You should be able to drop the box from belly height without any bottles breaking.
* Commercial Shipping kits like [Gorilla Shipper](https://gorillashipper.com/) or [Spirited Shippers](https://spiritedshipper.com/) work great, but you’ll pay for it.

**Boxing up Cans**

* Generally all of the same rules apply with a bit more leniency.
* While cans are less likely to break or leak, they still can if not packaged correctly. There should be some protective layer between the box walls and the cans and there must be no movement in the box.
* While likely overkill, I still like to wrap each can in an individual layer of bubble wrap.

**Finishing up**

* Affix the shipping label to the box. Cover the entire label with packaging tape to protect it from water/rain
* Drop off at shipping location
  + Just go in and say you’re dropping off a package.
  + For extra cost and reassurance you can schedule a pick from home. You will never be asked “What's in the box?!?!
* Depending on the carrier, you might be able to drop off at alternative locations (UPS/CVS). Consider when the carrier picks up from the alternative locations.

**Other Things to Consider**

* Websites like Pirateship.com offer significantly reduced cost on shipping
* If dropping off at a carrier, don’t wear beer clothes
* Have an answer to what’s in the box if asked (candles, glassware)
* Don’t use boxes that suggest there’s liquid inside
* There should be no movement in the box that would suggest liquid is inside; clinking beer bottles, etc.
* Consider the time of year and where you’re shipping; shipping to further away comps in the winter will be more forgiving than shipping to far away comps in the summer. I consider far away comps to be ones where the box arrives in 3 days or more