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Ever find yourself staring at your packaging and wondering what all of those packing symbols mean? Whether it’s you who has received the packaging, or your customer who has received it, there’s always use of one or more signs on the box. These packing symbols are recognized internationally and provide information about the product inside in an easy and comprehensible way. While using most of these symbols on your boxes is completely voluntary, it is advised to use ones that alert receivers or transporters about possible dangers during transit. Though some packaging symbols are self-explanatory, we have created a guide to help you recognize each symbol, understand its meaning, and also put it to use when required.Handling and care symbolsThis symbol, consisting of two arrows pointing towards the top, directs in which way the box is to be placed to ensure it is upright. If the packaging holds this symbol, it means that the contents must never be carried sideways or upside-down as they might break. It’s also a good indication of which side to open the box from.FragileYou might find the word “fragile” printed onto some boxes which makes it fairly self-explanatory. The items inside the box are prone to damage and thus, need to be managed carefully. Sometimes, you will find a cracked wine glass printed on the box instead of the word. This also represents fragility. In most cases, this might mean there is glass or glass-like components in the box.Handle with careIf you see hands cupping a box, then this symbol represents ‘handle with care’. This means that the box contains a lot of intricate parts or parts that can get damaged when mishandled. Unlike the fragile sign, the handle with care sign signifies that the box must not be stacked and should be loaded and carried around with lots of care.Keep DryThe umbrella signifies the need to keep the box in a dry environment and never leave it in the rain. This symbol also tells you that the items inside the box are not waterproof. Read more about how weather affects packaging here.Temperature-sensitiveTemperature-sensitive is depicted with the logo of a thermometer and the degree in which it should be stored. Even if the general rule of thumb is to keep it away from direct sunlight and the rain, some products (e.g. pharmaceuticals) might need to be stored in closer ranges of temperature.Protect from direct sunlightThe ‘protect from direct sunlight’ sign shows a box under sunlight with a line across it. This could mean that the contents inside the box can be damaged when placed under the sun (e.g. food) or that they are flammable and can burn (see the next symbol). This symbol is similar to temperature-sensitive but less specific as to what temperature to store it in.Flammable materialsThe fire symbol represents flammable materials. This means that the items inside the box and the box itself can burn and cause damage when left near an open fire, smoke, hot surfaces, or sparks. This holds true for items containing chemicals or anything made of paper.Do not open with knifeThis symbol states that the package should not be opened with a knife because it runs the risk of damaging the contents inside.Do not place near magnetsThe contents of a package may be sensitive to magnetic forces. If this is the case, then this symbol prevents handlers from placing the package near a magnet.Maximum stacking heightIf you see two parallel horizontal bars with a number on top, it signifies the stack height. This would depend on the contents inside the box and the thickness and strength of the box itself. Make sure to check the number of the symbol (it isn’t always the same). If you see the number 4, then it means that only 4 or fewer boxes of a similar kind can be stacked on top of one another. Any more than 4 and you’re at the risk of damaging the boxes at the bottom.Do not stackIn some cases, you will see two horizontal bars with a red line across. This means that the boxes cannot be stacked. These boxes are too fragile or contain items that can damage easily with pressure. Do not hookThis sign is represented by a hook with an X marked on it. It means that the boxes are too heavy to be hooked onto something or to be carried using a hook. Doing so might cause the boxes to open from below.Do not liftA person trying to lift the box with a prohibition sign on it is the symbol telling you that the box may be too heavy to lift alone. You might need a trolley or the help of a second person. Watch out for either of these symbols as shown below.ScopeThe scope symbol represents the center of gravity, and lets handlers know the weight distribution of the contents of the package.Two-person liftingIf you see two people lifting the box in the symbol, it means that the box can be lifted with the help of another person or a few more people.Trolley liftingIf the sign shows a trolley with boxes on it, it would mean that you would need to use a trolley to lift the box. It is advised not to ignore this symbol since it could mean that the boxes not only need to be lifted properly but also placed back on the ground smoothly.Sustainability symbolsRecycle signThis is one of the most commonly recognized signs on any box. The recycle symbols signifies that a part of the box has been recycled before, made from recycled materials, or that the entire box can be recycled after use. This symbol is a representation of sustainable practices on the part of the shipper.FSC signThe Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification ensures suppliers and businesses are seeking, buying, and using materials that come from well-managed forests and recycled sources. The sign is to say that the materials of the box are FSC approved. It is important to note that not everyone can use the FSC label. Due to the Chain-of-Custody certification process, every business that wants to produce or outsource an FSC-certified product or package must follow FSC guidelines.Tidy manThe sign of a man disposing of waste in a trash can signifies the general act of being responsible when it comes to discarding your boxes or the items inside (e.g. tissue paper, bubble wrap, etc). Plastic recyclingPlastic recycling signs depend on what type of plastic was recycled. It is represented with the recycle symbol and a number in the middle. The number should tell you the type of plastic that was recycled and used. 1 - Recycling PET or PETE (polyethylene terephthalate)This type of plastic is used to make water bottles and other single-use items. 2 - Recycling HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene)This plastic is found in slightly more sturdy plastic items such as shampoo bottles and tubs. 3 - PVC (Vinyl or Polyvinyl Chloride) You have probably heard of PVC pipes, this plastic is tough and good to be used in any weather and thus is used for piping and siding. 4 - LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene)This is a more flexible plastic found in shopping bags. 5 - PP (Polypropylene) This type of plastic has a high melting point and thus can sustain hot liquids or solids. It is used in some cups and straws. 6 - PS (Polystyrene)Styrofoam is essentially made of this type of plastic. It is more rigid than other types.7 - Other Plastic TypesAny other type of plastic or resins that don’t fall under the above categories are classified as ‘other’.--There you have it! These are some of the most commonly used packing symbols on shipping cartons or mailer boxes. This list of shipping symbols is not exhaustive, and you may find that there are certain symbols that are country-specific or even specific to the type of packaging and the use (e.g. food packaging). In addition, there are other icons for packaging that provide a visual way to communicate important product information. They serve to quickly and efficiently convey details like ingredients, usage instructions, and recycling guidelines. Ships tomorrow. Order within 00 hrs 00 mins Orders over $29.95 ship for free. * Call Now for Quote! Call our sales team at (800) 952-1457 and get your quote in minutes! Mon - Fri 8:00am to 7:00pm EST In the world of shipping, it is imperative that handlers of cargo understand the items they are dealing with. Knowing the characteristics of an item and how it should be handled is necessary for both safety and smooth transportation. ISO 780:2015 - the international regulations published by ISO, the International Organization for Standardization - include a series of graphical symbols that are used for marking distribution packages. These universal shipping marks used in export packing indicate the type of item contained in a wooden crate. This informs handlers and makes it easier for customs officers and other officials to determine the nature of goods being shipped; preventing delays and ensuring that goods are handled appropriately. Correct shipping marks contain handling instructions and signal that certain packing regulations have been met, avoiding penalties for non-compliance. IES has been manufacturing custom wooden crates and providing export packing services for manufacturers since 1991, working with high-technology sectors such as semiconductor, pharmaceutical and print. In this guide, we cover the universal shipping marks used in export packing; displaying the markings, defining what they mean, and explaining when they are used. Centre Of Gravity This ‘Centre Of Gravity’ symbol is intended to indicate an object’s centre of gravity to handers. The symbol is only applied to packages with uneven weight distribution - if an item’s centre of gravity is central, this mark is not applied. For the purposes of visibility, this marking will typically be applied to two vertical surfaces that are at right angles to each other. Using the ‘Centre Of Gravity’ mark correctly can protect a package and its contents; helping to avoid a package with uneven weight distribution toppling over or being dropped during transit. Clamp As Indicated The ‘Clamp As Indicated’ symbol indicates where a package should be clamped by a clamp truck. It is placed on two opposite sides of a package. Clamp trucks are specialised forklifts which are particularly suitable for securely handling packages that are irregularly shaped or packed unconventionally. It is important that the two ‘Clamp As Indicated’ marks are in the clamp truck operator’s visual range. This will allow the operator to see the symbols clearly when approaching. Only packages marked accordingly should be handled by clamp-type lifting devices. Do Not Clamp As Indicated This mark is essentially the opposite of the symbol above. It indicates that packages shouldn’t be handled by clamp trucks and other clamping devices on the sides to which it is applied. The mark is used only to show where the package shouldn’t be clamped. The prohibition element of the symbol - that is, the cross which goes through the standard ‘Clamp as Indicated’ symbol - may be handwritten. Do Not Roll The ‘Do Not Roll’ mark indicates that a package should not be rolled over. This mark will typically be applied when a package contains items which cannot be overturned, including glass objects, sculptures, optical equipment or electronic devices. ISO 780:2015 guidance states that the mark should only be used when it is necessary. It is acceptable for the prohibition element (cross) of the marking to be handwritten. Do Not Stack This symbol indicates that stacking of the package is not permitted and that no load should be placed on the item. The ‘Do Not Stack’ mark is important to preserve the integrity of a package in shipping or storage. The ISO 780:2015 regulations suggest that the prohibition symbol (cross) should be added by hand immediately if the deterioration of the package is observed. When applying the marking, it is important that the symbol is displayed upright in the orientation shown. Do Not Turnover Similar in its purpose to ‘Do Not Roll’, the Do Not Turnover mark alerts handlers that a package should not be turned over in shipping or storage. This typically applies to delicate or fragile items; from electronic devices to glass objects and pieces of art. The mark should only be used when it is necessary, and the prohibition element (cross) of the symbol can be handwritten. Do Not Use Hand Truck Here The application of the ‘Do Not Use Hand Truck Here’ symbol on the surface of a package indicates that a hand truck must not be placed on a particular side when moving an item. It is important that this mark is only used when necessary, and the prohibition element (cross) of the symbol may be handwritten. Fragile This symbol is to alert handlers that the contents of a package are fragile, and therefore should be handled with care. Ideally, ‘Fragile’ markings should be applied on all four upright sides of a package, in either the left-hand upper corner or right-hand upper corner. For packages in which there is not enough space to apply the marking on all four sides, it should be applied on at least two sides, in the upper corners. This marking should only be applied on packages which contain items that cannot be adequately protected by normal packaging. Hermetically Sealed Bag This symbol indicates that a bag is hermetically sealed. Hermetic seals make an object completely airtight for shipment, preventing any passage of air or oxygen. Hermetically sealed bags are often used for contents such as biohazard waste, powders and laboratory or medical supplies. Hermetically sealed bags also ensure that if contents were to be spilt, they cannot damage other items in the same package. Keep Away From Rain This symbol is a warning that a package must be kept in dry conditions, away from rain. The mark should be applied in an upright position as shown above, and should only be used when necessary. Typically, this mark is applied to packages containing items which can easily be damaged by rain, including electronic devices, electrical equipment and components. Keep Away From Sunlight This symbol alerts handlers that a package should not be exposed to direct sunlight. The mark should be applied in an upright position as shown above, and should only be used when necessary. The ‘Keep Away From Sunlight’ mark may be applied to packages containing UV-sensitive materials including plastics or rubber, or contents which shouldn’t be exposed to heat, such as electronic devices, components, and chemical substances. Lift Up Directly For The Goods This mark tells the recipient of goods how the unit should be handled during unloading. It symbolises that the item should be lifted vertically and directly upwards, without tilting, dragging, or applying any side pressure. The marking can be denoted with hands, slings or a forklift, depending on the size, weight and expected handling method of the goods. In the version we show here, the mark is denoted using slings. No Hand Hooks This symbol indicates that hand hooks should not be used when handling a package. A hand hook is a tool which can be moved for moving or securing loads. The ‘No Hand Hooks’ mark should only be used when necessary. Guidelines permit the prohibition element (cross) of the symbol to be handwritten. Open Here The arrow symbol of the ‘Open Here’ mark is pointed towards the location of a package which should be opened first. The words ‘Open Here’ are sometimes displayed directly below the arrow. This mark should not be confused with the pair of arrows displayed by the ‘This Way Up’ mark, which means that a package shouldn’t be laid on its side or upside down. Packaging For Tropical Conditions This symbol indicates that the packaging of a shipped item is suitable for a tropical climatic zone. The ‘Packaging For Tropical Conditions’ symbol shows that if damage occurs to the packaging of an item, it is likely that the cargo itself will also become damaged. Perishable Cargo The ‘Perishable Cargo” symbol marks products which need to be transported or stored under specific conditions. It indicates that the contents of a package need to be kept at a certain temperature and require refrigeration, ventilation or heating to ensure their quality and avoid spoilage. This mark is usually used for food and beverages with a limited shelf life, such as meat or other fresh produce. Protect From Contamination Environment This symbol serves the purpose of reminding the recipient of a consignment that its packaging must be thrown in the bin. This may be to ensure that the packaging materials do not contaminate the environment at the destination. Protect From Radiation The ‘Protect From Radiation’ shipping mark indicates that the product or item should be protected from exposure to radiation during transport or storage. As represented by the word ‘FOTO’, this symbol indicates that the item in the package may be sensitive to light or requires protection from exposure to light sources. This could be important for items such as photographic film, sensitive electronic equipment, or other light-sensitive materials that could be damaged by exposure to radiation or light. Protect From Radioactive Sources This symbol is a warning that if exposed to penetrating ionising radiation, a package may be damaged, deteriorate, or be rendered completely unusable. The mark should only be used when necessary and should be applied in the same orientation shown above. Recyclable Material This common recycling symbol - also known as the Mobius Loop - indicates that packaging used for an item can be recycled. The ‘Recyclable Material’ symbol is not intended to mean that the packaging is made from recycled materials. If the packaging contains recycled material, a % mark may be displayed within the logo, indicating the amount of recycled materials used in the production of the packaging. Sling Here This mark indicates where slings should be placed for lifting packages. When sheathed crates are lifted up with a crane while wire rope slings are not properly positioned, there is a risk of the upper frame member of the crate or skid base collapsing, causing a falling accident. Heavy packages should be marked with the symbol, which should be placed on two opposite sides of the package. The location where the mark is applied should allow the package to be kept in a horizontal position. Stacking Limited By Mass This symbol means that there is a maximum stacking load that can be placed on the package when stacking. It is important to specify the maximum stacking load that is permitted on the bottom package in a stack for safety and to improve loading and storage efficiency. The figure that indicates the maximum load mass permitted should be corrected by hand immediately if the deterioration of the package has been observed. Stack Limited By Number This mark displays the maximum number of crates or items that may be stacked on top of a bottom package. The ‘n’ in the symbol represents the limiting number, which is not inclusive of the bottom package itself. Indicating the maximum number of crates or items that may be stacked on the bottom package is important for safety, as well as loading and storage efficiency. If deterioration of packages is detected, the limiting number represented by ‘n’ may be corrected by hand on-site. The prohibition symbol (cross) in the marking may also be handwritten. Temperature Limits The ‘Temperature Limits’ mark displays the temperature limits within which packages should be handled, transported and stored. The maximum temperature is displayed at the top of the mark, with the minimum temperature at the bottom. This symbol should only be used for packages which require temperature control. This Way Up The two upward-pointing arrows in this symbol indicate the correct upright position for a package during transportation or storage. Guidelines state that the mark should be applied to all four upright sides of a package, near either the upper left or upper right corner. If there isn’t space on all four upright sides, the mark should be applied to the upper corners of at least two of the panels. In the case of unit loads - when several packages are bound together - the marks should be located so that they are visible. Use No Forks This mark means that fork-type lifting devices - such as forklift trucks, reach trucks and pallet jacks - should not be used in the handling or transportation of a package. The symbol should only be used when it is necessary, and the prohibition element (cross) may be handwritten. There are some things you expect to see on a cardboard box – like the brand name or logo of the business you ordered from. There are some things you might not expect – like an umbrella on the side of your box. But being unexpected doesn’t make it wrong. The umbrella is one of many common packaging symbols which can communicate simple messages to the person packing, delivering or receiving your boxes. We love helping businesses understand our industry better. So, we’re breaking down the international packaging symbols. Find out why we use packaging icons and the meaning behind 20+ of the most common symbols. Why do we use packaging symbols? Packaging symbols are a simple way to communicate information in any culture and language around the world. The International Standards Organisation (ISO) manage a database of symbols for all kinds of packaging. Using the symbols is voluntary, but they can be useful in protecting your goods throughout the supply chain. It is common to use more than one symbol to communicate your important messages. You don’t have to use the ISO packaging symbols either. Some companies choose to write key messages on their packaging – such as ‘fragile’, ‘this way up’ or ‘heavy’. If you do decide the packaging symbols are right for your boxes, you need to know which ones are best to use. The most common packaging icons These packaging icons are so common, that many business owners are already familiar with them. In case you’re new to packaging – here’s what they mean. This side up Two arrows pointing upward is the standard symbol for ‘this side up’. It means this box should not be tipped on its side or laid down flat. Storing or moving this box from any other angle could damage the contents. This symbol is frequently used for technology, machinery and other important equipment. Fragile A simple broken wine glass is the universal symbol for ‘fragile’. It is mostly used on glass products, but not always. Sometimes you find both the image and the word used together. Handle with care Hands cupping a box means ‘handle with care’. It is meant to warn couriers that this product is easily broken. It is not recommended to stack these boxes. This symbol is common for technology like smartphones, TVs and laptops. Recycled or recyclable Three arrows in a triangle, also known as the Mobius loop, is a universal symbol for recycling. Its primary meaning is that this box is recyclable and was designed to help consumers dispose of packaging easily. Anther meaning could be that this box was made from recycled materials. In this case, it is common to have a percentage in the middle of the loop which tells you how much recycled material was used. Box symbols for weather and temperature Some products are sensitive to certain weather conditions or temperatures. These packaging symbols help you communicate how to deliver or store those boxes. Please keep dry An umbrella with or without rain drops is the symbol for ‘please keep dry’. It means this box should be kept out of the rain and away from moisture, since the products inside are not waterproof. It is common to use this symbol for technology and paper products. Keep out of sun A box shielded from sunlight is the symbol for ‘keep out of sun’. It means the products inside could be perishable, like food, or flammable like posters, book covers or liquids. Leaving this box in direct sunlight could be dangerous. Temperature sensitive Sometimes, boxes have a more specific symbol which is a thermometer showing a high and low temperature. The products inside need to be kept within this temperature range or they might be damaged. It’s a common symbol for pharmaceuticals and food products. Flammable A small fire symbol means the products inside this box are flammable. The box should be kept away from open flames, sparks and hot surfaces. It’s a common symbol for boxes containing chemicals or paper products. Symbols for safe handling The primary purpose of packaging symbols is to help with safe handling and delivery. So, it’s no surprise that this category has many symbols to learn. Stacking height Two bars with a number on top tells you the maximum stacking height. The number can change, but the two bars always look the same. The number tells you how many boxes it is safe to create a stack out of. Do not stack Two boxes with a large X is a symbol for ‘do not stack’. This tells you these boxes are not suitable for stacking – usually because the box is too fragile or the products inside are delicate. Do not lift If you see a person holding a box with a little emphasis on their back, it means ‘do not lift’. This symbol tells you the box is too heavy to lift by hand. You should find machinery to help. Lift with assistance An image of two people lifting a box means you can lift this by hand, but only with assistance. The box is still heavy so it is recommended to lift it with more than one person. Box weight Heavy boxes have many types of symbols they can use. One common choice is a weight symbol with a kg or lb in the centre. The number inside tells you how much the box weighs and helps the handler decide how to move this package. Do not open with a knife A knife with a large or small X symbol means ‘do not open with a blade’. The product inside may be close to the box edges and could be damaged by knife opening. This symbol is common for products like pillows, mattresses and books. Do not hook If you see a hook with a large X, that means these boxes are too heavy to be carried on a hook. Ignoring this symbol might mean your boxes split open at the bottom. Do not drop It might seem obvious, as no-one wants their boxes dropped, but sometimes this symbol is needed. A box falling with an X means ‘do not drop’. It tells you that the product inside will be damaged should the box take a hard hit. Do not use forklift An image of a forklift with an X means this package is not suitable for transport on a forklift. Transport with a trolley An image of boxes on a trolley means this box can be moved using a trolley. This symbol is useful for heavy products that should be moved smoothly, such as refrigerators, washing machines and other appliances. Specialty packaging symbols There are a handful of specialty symbols that you might not see often, but it’s worth knowing what they mean. Here are three to look out for. Do not place near magnets A symbol showing a magnet with a large X means this product is sensitive to magnetic forces. Certain technology and specialist equipment might carry this symbol. Hard drives are a more common product that may use it. Centre of gravity A symbol showing a broken circle with a cross on top tells you where the package weight is concentrated. It is often used for long items, such as a golf club which carries most weight in the heavy club side and less in the handle. FSC Certified The letters FSC underneath a tree is the symbol for FSC certified. Not everyone can use this symbol, you need to be an FSC member and have the certification. But, if you do use it – it means you have committed to sourcing materials from responsibly managed forests and using recycled materials where possible. Answers to all your packaging questions Echo Cartons have been trusted cardboard box manufacturers for more than 25 years. We love sharing our industry expertise with customers. You can find all kinds of great packaging advice on the blog. If you have another question, simply contact our team. Or if you’re ready to kickstart a packaging order – you can request a quote. SOLD IN BULK ROLLS OF 500: Order in Multiples of 1 Pack.Also Available Custom Printed. Call for details. Description/Message 500 Labels/Roll • Price per Roll 1 Roll(500 Labels) 2 Rolls(1000 labels) 6 Rolls(3000 labels) 10 Rolls(5000 labels) 20 Rolls(10000 Labels) Fragile/Do Not StackSpecial instruction Label $32.00 $28.00 $25.00 $22.00 $20.00 Specifications Size 4" x 3" Package 500 Labels/Roll Material Printed Label Label Color Red Ink Color Black Features Clearly indicate special instructions. Label is preprinted using letterpress or flexographic inks. Permanent Adhesive View AllClose Hello, Welcome To Orient Quality Print Pte Ltd! Customer Service Hotline : +65 6214 9490EnglishThai

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