

# Amazon Frustration-Free Packaging Program Certification Guidelines

---

Frustration Free Packaging Programs: Tier 1 – Frustration-Free Packaging, Tier 2 - Ships in its Own Container and Tier 3 - Prep-Free Packaging



This document and these specifications are confidential information and remain exclusive property of Amazon. This document does not grant any rights to program participants (Vendors, Sellers, Distributors, and Manufacturers) including rights to participate in this initiative or use any names, marks, packaging dress or other proprietary rights related to the Amazon Packaging Certification Initiative Program. Any such rights will be subject to separate Amazon Packaging Certification Initiative Terms and Conditions. This document does not constitute an express or implied grant of any rights to or under Amazon's patents, copyrights, trade secrets, trademarks or other intellectual property rights. Amazon reserves the right to revise or withdraw these specifications without notice at any time in our sole discretion.

**Version 10.3 Global, Amazon Network, 2021**

*Updated: 1/19/2021*

## **Table of Contents**

| <b><u>Section</u></b>                               | <b><u>Page</u></b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Introduction</b>                                 | <b>1</b>           |
| <b>Amazon Packaging Certification Tiers</b>         | <b>2</b>           |
| <b>Benefits of Packaging Certification</b>          | <b>2</b>           |
| <b>Certification Requirements</b>                   | <b>3</b>           |
| <b>Transit Testing for Packaging Certification</b>  | <b>5</b>           |
| <b>Certification Test Success Criteria</b>          | <b>6</b>           |
| <b>Starting the Packaging Certification Process</b> | <b>6</b>           |

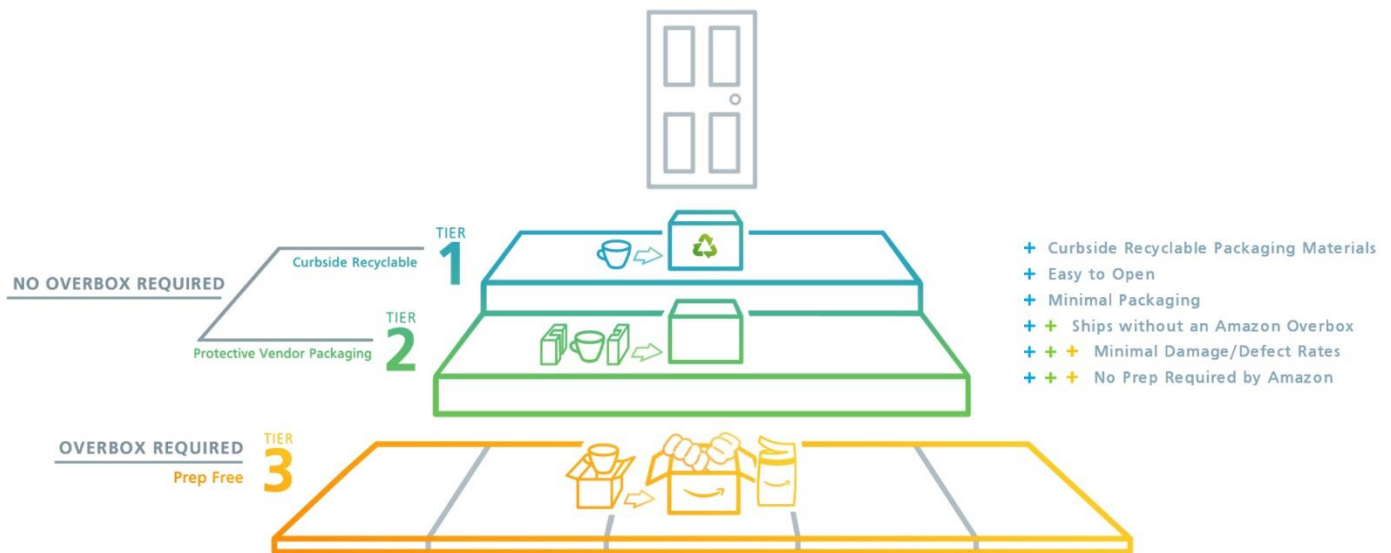
### **Introduction**

Inventing packaging at the 'Everything Store' is a unique challenge. With many millions of items for sale we needed to invent a system that inspired the industry. Listening to the customer was the starting point. While they often tell us they loved how their products were packaged, they also told us when our packaging didn't work – when products were damaged, when the packaging was too big, or just too hard to open. This data is one of the key stimuli that informed our worldwide packaging team to invent and simplify a system called the Frustration-Free Packaging Program to embody a set of core tenants, test methods and a certification process to scale our ideas across millions of products.

At Amazon, it's our mission to be the world's most customer-centric company, and we continue to raise the bar by providing customers with what they want: minimal, protective and functional packaging. Our goal is that every item received by Amazon falls in to one of our certification tiers in the Frustration Free Packaging Program: Tier 1 – Frustration-Free Packaging, Tier 2 - Ships in its Own Container and Tier 3 - Prep-Free Packaging. Certified packaging must protect the product from damage throughout the supply chain to the customer's doorstep without the need for additional packaging or prep by Amazon. This ensures we lower packaging waste and reduce our environmental footprint. Packaging must be easy to open and eliminate 'wrap rage', so common with consumer packaging. Finally, we expect that all packaging components are designed for recyclability. These tenants embody our program and ensure packaging is designed to reduce waste and are ready to ship to customers as received from our Vendors.

As we partner with our Vendors to achieve these goals, we created these Packaging Certification Guidelines to improve sustainability and drive innovations to improve the customer experience, decrease the environmental impact of consumption, lower supply chain costs and unlock additional selection. More information on how to design, test and certify packaging for Amazon can be found at [www.aboutamazon.com/packaging](http://www.aboutamazon.com/packaging).

## Amazon Frustration-Free Packaging Program Certification Tiers



### Benefits of Packaging Certification

| BENEFITS:                                          | Amazon Packaging Certification Tiers |               |              |
|----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                                                    | Tier 1 (FFP)                         | Tier 2 (SIOC) | Tier 3 (PFP) |
| Reduction/Removal of Amazon Prep Chargebacks       | ✓                                    | ✓             | ✓            |
| Reduction/Removal of Amazon FFP/SIOC Chargebacks   | ✓                                    | ✓             |              |
| Opportunity to Reduce Packaging costs              | ✓                                    | ✓             |              |
| Opportunity to Reduce Inbound Transportation costs | ✓                                    | ✓             |              |

- A. **Reduction/Removal of Amazon Prep Chargebacks:** When an ASIN is certified as Tier 1 (FFP), Tier 2 (SIOC) or Tier 3 (PFP) Amazon will ensure your ASIN is not sidelined to have additional Amazon-prep applied. This provides Vendors with the ability to avoid prep chargebacks.
- B. **Reduction/Removal of Amazon FFP/SIOC Chargebacks:** When an ASIN is certified as Tier 1 (FFP) or Tier 2 (SIOC), Amazon will ensure your ASIN is not levied a FFP/SIOC chargeback at inbound (chargeback currently limited to non-sortable ASINs across NA and EU).
- C. **Opportunity to Reduce Packaging Costs:** Standard retail packaging is often designed to grab a customer's attention by utilizing full-color glossy printing, being oversized to gain more shelf presence, or by employing windows, cutouts, and other costly packaging features not necessary for Amazon customers. By optimizing packaging for Amazon fulfillment and eliminating unnecessary package marketing features, Vendors can reduce waste, enhance sustainability and realize cost savings.

- D. **Opportunity to Reduce Inbound Transportation Costs:** When packaging is optimized for Amazon fulfillment, the package is “right sized” for the total supply chain. Smaller packages translate to lower transportation costs (more units per pallet/truck/container). It is also less costly for Amazon to ship that same package to the customer, saving money for both the Vendor and Amazon.

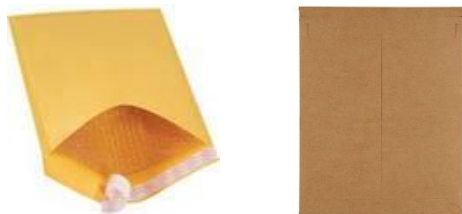
### **Certification Requirements**

| REQUIREMENTS:                                                                                                                            | Amazon Packaging Certification Tiers |               |              |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------------|
|                                                                                                                                          | Tier 1 (FFP)                         | Tier 2 (SIOC) | Tier 3 (PFP) |
| <b>Protective Against Damage</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ISTA 6 Compliant</li> <li>• No Amazon-Prep Required</li> </ul> | ✓                                    | ✓             | ✓            |
| <b>Designed to Reduce Waste</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ships Without an Amazon Overbox</li> </ul>                      | ✓                                    | ✓             |              |
| <b>Recyclable Packaging</b>                                                                                                              | ✓                                    |               |              |
| <b>Easy-To-Open</b>                                                                                                                      | ✓                                    |               |              |

- A. **Packaging Construction:** Product packaging must be a rigid, six-sided shape, and rectangular, capable of stacking on a fluid-loaded mixed trailer and surviving the parcel delivery network or Less-than-Truckload (LTL) shipping, as validated by passing the ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) test method. An exception exists for small items which are shipped in gaylords and/or carts. In this scenario only, padded mailers (see below) and rigid envelopes may be used. However, they still must pass the ISTA 6-Amazon.com SIOC test. Rectangular cartons are always the preferred packaging method, and polybags are never allowed due to concerns about conveyance that can cause tears and punctures. Package panels must be flat and free of protrusions, windows and cut-outs. Access holes/hand holes are allowed but cannot exceed dimensions of 3.5”x1.0” standard size

Rigid and Padded Mailers – packaged-products are defined as any packaged-product where the:

- Volume is less than 13,000 cm<sup>3</sup> ( 800 in<sup>3</sup> ), and
- Longest dimension is 457mm ( 18 in ) or less and
- Weight is 4.5 kg ( 10lb ) or less
- Example:



- B. **Minimum Packaging Dimensions:** Product packaging must meet the minimum dimensions listed below, with no exceptions to certify your products as Tier 1 FFP or Tier 2 SIOC. Any product packaging with dimensions smaller than those listed below can only qualify for Tier 3 (PFP) as it will require additional over boxing by Amazon. PFP certification is optional at this time.

| Minimum Acceptable Packaging Dimensions<br>Tier 1 (FFP)/Tier 2 (SIOC) |              |              |                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| Region                                                                | Length       | Width        | Height          |
| NA                                                                    | 6" (152.4mm) | 4" (101.6mm) | 0.375" (9.5 mm) |
| EU                                                                    | 6" (152.4mm) | 4" (101.6mm) | 0.375" (9.5 mm) |

- C. **Packaging Sealing**: All open edges must be adequately sealed to ensure the product remains protected while in the fulfillment center and throughout its distribution to the customer. Staples are not allowed as a sealing method, but are permitted on the manufacturer glue joint. Locking tabs must be properly sealed with glue or tape. For oversized products, non-metal straps/bands, are permitted to provide structural integrity to the outer shipper, as long as the straps are tightly fitted around the product. Bundling multiple packages with straps or bands is not permitted.
- D. **Package Printing and Identification Labeling**: Package markings and labeling must clearly indicate contents and communicate any unique handling instructions. All certified packages must also follow the labeling and carton marking requirements as outlined in the Vendor Shipment Prep and Transportation Manual available within the Vendor Central Resource Centers.
- E. **HAZMAT Classified Products**: At this time, we cannot offer certification as Tier 1 FFP or Tier 2 SIOC for HAZMAT products (ASINs with a UN number) and/or if the packaging has any transportation regulated symbols or markings. Tier 3 PFP certifications are allowed for HAZMAT items.
- F. **Product-to-Packaging Ratio**: “Product” is defined as the total cubic volume of the primary product and the included components necessary for the function/use of the product. Product-to-Package ratio is calculated as: the volume of the product, divided by the total volume of the packaging. See example below:

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

**Box-Utilization Score must be greater than 30% and 50% for fragile and non-fragile products for Tier 1 FFP Certifications.**

- Fragile products include, but are not limited to, items containing:
    - Glass, ceramic, porcelain, clay
    - Liquid/semi-liquids; Solids that can become liquid at temperatures experienced during the distribution cycle (above 70°F or 21.1°C).
    - If a product has 50% or greater of its total pieces containing fragile material, the product will be deemed fragile and 5 complete samples will be needed for testing. All others will only need one sample for certification.
      - For example: 4 piece pots/pans: 4 pots/pans, 4 glass lids- the sample would be deemed fragile (50% of total 4 of 8 are fragile). 4 pots, 2 glass lids- the sample would not be deemed fragile as only 2 of the 6 pieces are fragile (less than 50%).
- G. **Recyclable Packaging**: For Tier 1 (FFP), packaging must be made of 100% curbside recyclable materials. Acceptable materials include: corrugated and other paper-based materials, and/or plastic components marked with SPI codes 1 (PET), 2 (HDPE), and 5 (PP). In the U.S., packaging must be in compliance with the FTC’s Green Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims, ([www.ftc.gov](http://www.ftc.gov); Section 260.12). For the EU, please refer to the legislation on European Parliament and Council Directive 94/62/EC of 20 December 1994 on packaging and packaging waste. These are meant as examples only, and Vendors are responsible for complying with all applicable laws. Additionally, printing and/or treatments must not affect the recyclability of the package.
- Plastic films or bags are only allowed in situations where the product requires abrasion and dust protection, or small parts containment. Only plastic film printed with SPI codes 2 (HDPE) and 4 (LDPE) are acceptable.
  - Twist ties are allowed to manage cord organization only, and cannot be used to secure the product to its packaging.

- Silica gel bags are allowed.
- Flexible films or bags that provide barrier properties and maintain product quality or freshness are allowed.

H. **Easy-To-Open:** Tier 1 (FFP) packaging must be easy-to-open by the customer with minimal use of scissors or box cutter. Packaging must not contain blister packs, plastic inserts, packaging peanuts, shredded paper, or welded clam shells. All contents must be removable from the package within 120 seconds.

### **Transit Testing for Packaging Certification**

- A. **Testing Procedures:** Tests must be conducted according to the International Safe Transit Association test methods: ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) used for Tier 1 (FFP) and Tier 2 (SIOC) testing, or ISTA 6-Amazon.com Over-Boxing method used for Tier 3 (PFP). These ISTA 6-Amazon.com tests were developed by ISTA in cooperation with Amazon, and have been designed as simulations that challenge the capability of the package and product to withstand common transport conditions. Complete ISTA testing standards are located at their corporate website ([www.ista.org](http://www.ista.org)).
- B. **Package Size Categories:** Packaging testing varies depending on the size of the item being tested. Packages within Amazon are separated into three categories based on dimensions and weight per region: OVERSIZED, STANDARD, and TIER 3 (PFP). Please see chart below for size categories, correlating certification levels and test methods:

|                                                            | Weight Requirements | AND/OR     | Dimensions Requirements                                                                                                                                                               | Testing Procedures                                 | Test Samples Required        |
|------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Standard</b><br><i>Tier 1 (FFP)/<br/>Tier 2 (SIOC)</i>  | < 50 lbs, 23 kg     | <b>AND</b> | ≥ 6.0 in. x 4.0 in. x 0.375 in. ( <i>Longest dimension cannot exceed 108 in.</i> ) - NA<br>≥ 152.4 mm. x 101.6 mm. x 9.5 mm.<br>( <i>Longest dimension cannot be &gt;274cm</i> ) - EU | ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC)<br><b>Type A</b>          | Non-Fragile: 1<br>Fragile: 5 |
| <b>Oversized</b><br><i>Tier 1 (FFP)/<br/>Tier 2 (SIOC)</i> | ≥ 50 lbs, 23 kg     | <b>OR</b>  | Any Dimension ≥ 108 in, 274 cm, or > 165" Girth                                                                                                                                       | ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC)<br><b>Type B – Type F</b> | Non-Fragile: 1<br>Fragile: 1 |
| <b>Televisions</b>                                         | < 150 lbs, 68kg     | <b>AND</b> | ≤ 165" Girth*                                                                                                                                                                         | ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC)<br><b>Type G</b>          | Non-Fragile: 1               |
| <b>Televisions</b>                                         | > 150 lbs, 68kg     | <b>OR</b>  | > 165" Girth*                                                                                                                                                                         | ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC)<br><b>Type H</b>          | Non-Fragile: 1               |
| <b>Tier 3 (PFP)</b>                                        | < 50bs, 23 kg       | <b>AND</b> | < 6.0in. x 4.0 in. x 0.375 in. (NA)<br><152.4mm x 101.6mm x 9.5mm (EU)                                                                                                                | ISTA 6-Amazon.com (OVER-BOXING)                    | Non-Fragile: 2<br>Fragile: 5 |

\*Girth = Length + 2\*Height + 2\*Width

## Certification Testing Success Criteria

### PASS or FAIL

#### Objective Fail

- Visible item damage
- Visible item breakage
- Loss of function (doesn't work)
- Lose of use (ex. cracked cap)
- Collectible items with any outer package wear
- Seal integrity is not intact
- Tamper evident application is compromised
- Tertiary packaging is split, torn edges, tape failure



#### Customer Focused Fail

- Wear, denting or scuffs on the outer package
  - Small/minor dents on the product itself
- To determine if the above would be deemed a failure, focus on the customer....
- Amazon Customer Packaging Experience Team will identify this if we perform the testing in our lab
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> party testing labs will rely on the Vendor to decide
  - The Vendor has final decision making authority on testing it performs or 3<sup>rd</sup> party lab testing results as to whether it qualifies as a Customer Fail

ASK: Would our customers accept this?

**IF NO = Customer Fail**

## Starting the Packaging Certification Process

In order to certify your product, you must enroll the ASIN in Vendor Central by selecting “Support”, then “Contact Us” then “What can we help you with?”, then scroll down and select “Amazon Packaging Certification”. To learn more about requesting help please click on the following link: [www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/certification](http://www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/certification). All enrollments must be submitted by completing a ISTA 6 Amazon certification test with a third party ISTA certified lab. Labs certified by ISTA to perform the ISTA6-Amazon-SIOC or ISTA6-Amazon-Over-Boxing test methods can be found [here](#).

**Certification Workflow:** Prior to enrolling your product for testing, please ensure you have performed the appropriate ISTA 6-Amazon.com test method and are confident that it will pass. It is important to note that when enrolling your item for certification (either through testing from an APASS lab or ISTA certified lab) the certification process is intended to be a FINAL confirmation that an ASIN meets our guidelines and requirements. Once an ASIN is certified after enrollment, the ASIN is immediately set to ship in its own container (Tier 1 or Tier 2) and/or prep instructions are removed (Tier 1, 2 and 3) unless a Future Certification Date is indicated in the Amazon Vendor Enrollment Template. Therefore, ASINs should not be enrolled for certification until the items are ready to begin shipping to the Amazon fulfillment network, or risk decertification of their ASIN. Details on how to submit an ASIN for certification can be found [here](#).

Vendors needing earlier design validation can perform the testing on their own or leverage an approved third party under the APASS network or an ISTA certified lab. The APASS network list can be found [here](#). Lab testing must comply with the correct ISTA 6-Amazon.com testing method using required test report templates that can be found at [www.ISTA.org](http://www.ISTA.org) or at [www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/testing](http://www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/testing).