

# Amazon Frustration-Free Packaging Program Certification Guidelines

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



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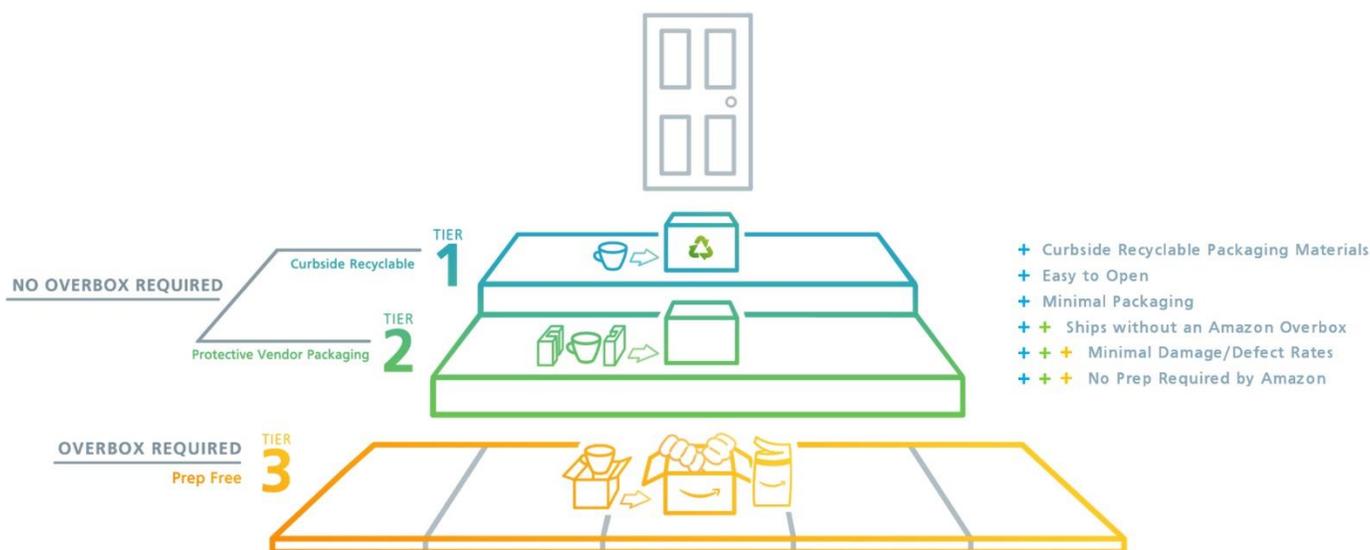
### Introduction

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 <https://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	✓	✓	
Opportunity to Receive Vendor Incentive	✓	✓	

- 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.
- E. **Opportunity to Receive Vendor Incentive:** Under the expanded program, newly certified Tier 1 FFP and Tier 2 Ship in Own Container (SIOC) packages that maintain or reduce dimensional volume will be eligible for incentives ranging from \$0.08 – \$6.49 for each unit received for one year following certification. The incentive amount is determined by FFP or SIOC certification and overall volume reduced from starting package size. Our current chargeback of \$1.99/unit for uncertified Non-Sortable ASINS will remain in place, but we are not expanding chargebacks to Sortable ASINS at this time.

### 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 or the Amazon-Vendor Drop test. An exception to the six-sided shape 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 if fragile or Amazon-Vendor drop test if nonfragile (defined in section F). Rectangular cartons are always the preferred packaging method, and polybags are not currently permitted due to concerns about conveyance which 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 shall be defined as any packaged-product where the:

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



- 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.

<b>Minimum Acceptable Packaging Dimensions Tier 1 (FFP)/Tier 2 (SIOC)</b>			
<b>Region</b>	<b>Length</b>	<b>Width</b>	<b>Height</b>
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. **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 ISTA-6 testing. Nonfragile, TV, and heavy/bulky products will only require 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 Amazon test methods: for fragile items use the ISTA 6-Amazon.com SIOC or ISTA 6-Amazon.com Overbox tests (for PFP certification). For non-fragile items use the Amazon-Vendor drop test procedure located on our packaging website [here](#). For non-fragile items that weigh more than 50 lbs. use the ISTA 6-Amazon.com SIOC test.

	Non Fragile less than 50 lbs.	Non Fragile Greater than 50lbs.	Fragile Less than 50 lbs.	Fragile Greater than 50 lbs.	PFP Fragile	PFP Non Fragile
ISTA 6 Amazon.com SIOC	✓	✓	✓	✓		
ISTA 6 Amazon.com Overbox					✓	✓
Amazon-Vendor drop test	✓					

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> Tier 1 (FFP)/ Tier 2 (SIOC)	< 50 lbs, 23 kg	AND	≥ 6.0 in. x 4.0 in. x 0.375 in. (Longest dimension cannot exceed 108 in.) - NA ≥ 152.4 mm. x 101.6 mm. x 9.5 mm. (Longest dimension cannot be >274cm) - EU	ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) <b>Type A</b> Or Amazon-Vendor drop test (nonfragile)	Non-Fragile: 1 Fragile: 5
<b>Oversized</b> Tier 1 (FFP)/ Tier 2 (SIOC)	≥ 50 lbs, 23 kg	OR	Any Dimension ≥ 108 in, 274 cm, or > 165" Girth	ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) <b>Type B – Type F</b>	Non-Fragile: 1 Fragile: 5
<b>Televisions</b>	< 150 lbs, 68kg	AND	≤ 165" Girth*	ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) <b>Type G</b>	Non-Fragile: 1
<b>Televisions</b>	> 150 lbs, 68kg	OR	> 165" Girth*	ISTA 6-Amazon.com (SIOC) <b>Type H</b>	Non-Fragile: 1
<b>Tier 3 (PFP)</b>	< 50bs, 23 kg	AND	< 6.0in. x 4.0 in. x 0.375 in. (NA) <152.4mm x 101.6mm x 9.5mm (EU)	ISTA 6-Amazon.com (OVER-BOXING)	Non-Fragile: 2 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)
- Loss 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: <https://www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/get-started/enroll>. All enrollments must be submitted by completing either an ISTA 6 Amazon certification test with a third party ISTA certified lab or an Amazon-Vendor Drop test with a test report. 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 or Amazon-Vendor drop test 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, ISTA Certified Lab, or by the Vendor) 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 and Vendor testing must comply with the correct testing method and test report templates that can be found at [www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/testing](http://www.aboutamazon.com/packaging/testing).