



TRANSPORTING SEAFOOD:

Quality & Safety

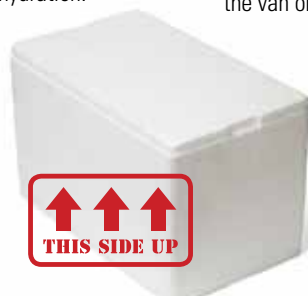
Proper planning and shipping techniques are necessary to make sure your seafood arrives at the buyer in the best condition possible. Typically, prices are directly related to product quality, so extra care and time spent on good handling practices throughout the supply chain can directly affect financial success.

COLD CHAIN MANAGEMENT

- Designate a storage temperature when contracting with a transportation carrier; optimum storage temperatures for maintaining product quality are 30° to 32° F. for fresh seafood, -10° to -20° F. for frozen seafood.
- Before loading a refrigerated van or truck, be sure the refrigeration systems are running properly and have been precooled to transport temperature. Shut off the refrigeration unit when loading begins.
- Require temperature checks along the route, and/or consider using a monitoring device in the packaging to be sure the shipping company is meeting expectations.
- Ask your buyer to sample core temperatures of incoming product.

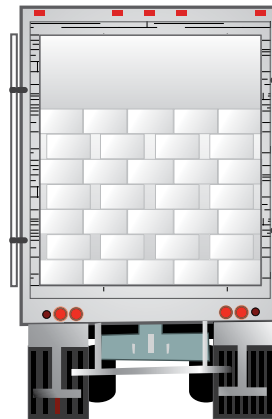
PACKAGING

- Fresh seafood should be layered in ice in strong, wax-impregnated boxes, or totes with drainage holes, that can be plugged. For long distances, gel packs are a better (and in some cases required) alternative.
- Frozen seafood (other than vacuum packed) should have an ice glaze to protect against dehydration. Wrap in polyethylene, as an added precaution, or if product is unglazed.
- Metal strapping is usually preferred to plastic or tape for securing the boxes or totes.
- Make sure labeling is clear and correct to avoid misdirected shipments, causing delays in delivery that affect product quality.



LOADING

- Product should be packed to prevent movement during transit, but air must be allowed to circulate around packages; do not stack boxes flush with the ceiling or the walls, and if possible keep them on pallets off the floor (especially oysters). Planks or pallets are a must in the bed of a pick-up truck.
- Fresh and/or live seafood containers should be stacked so there are narrow spaces between rows of containers in every other layer from the front of the van or shipping container to the back.
- Frozen seafood containers should be packed as tightly together as possible, leaving a 9-12 inch air space between the ceiling and stacks of product.



More information on truck transport at <http://bit.ly/USDATransport>

A Few Licensing Requirements

All operators and drivers of any form of commercial transport who are in the act of loading, unloading or transporting seafood must have one of the following:

- **Commercial Fisherman's License.** Only applies to a commercial fisherman transporting his own catch to a wholesale/retail seafood dealer.
- **Seafood Transport License.** May only be purchased by and in the name of a person holding a valid Louisiana Commercial Fisherman's license, Seafood Wholesale/Retail Dealer's license, or Seafood Retail Dealer's license, to transport seafood as allowed by state regulations.
- **Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealers Vehicle License.** This is applicable for all activities of wholesale/retail seafood dealers.

Vehicles commercially shipping seafood out of state must have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer's license or a Transport license purchased in connection with a Wholesale/ Retail Seafood Dealer's license.

See the most recent Commercial Fishing Regulations from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife & Fisheries for full details on shipping and licensing requirements; particularly for oysters.

