



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.

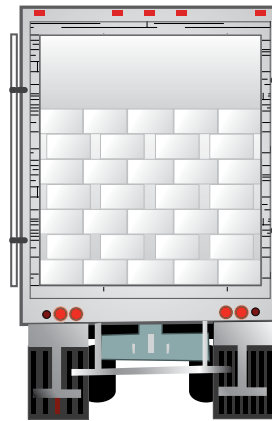
PACKAGING

- 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 additional 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 container to the back.



seafood containers packed as tightly as possible, 9-12 inch air between the ceiling and sides of product.

A Few Licensing Requirements

To operate any commercial transport vehicle and load, unload or transport seafood, you 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**
Needed if you are delivering seafood with a Wholesale/Retail Dealer Business License, a Retail Dealer Business License, or if you are transporting a commercial fisherman's catch to a wholesale/retail dealer for sale.
- **Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer Vehicle License**

Vehicles commercially shipping seafood out of state must have a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer License or a Transport License purchased in connection with a Wholesale/Retail Seafood Dealer 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 and crabs.



More information on truck transport at bit.ly/UFExtension_Transport