

# Freight Class

What the heck is it anyway



If you're shipping freight, you'll need to understand freight class and how it affects your shipment. Freight class is a system using the National Motor Freight Classification (NMFC) tariff that determines your shipping rate. Shipping commodities are grouped into 18 freight classes between 50 and 500.

# Freight Class.

There are 4 characteristics of freight class which affect your shipment.

## Density

1

The space an item occupies in relation to its weight. Heavy and sturdy objects are easier to transport, so they're assigned a lower freight class than lighter objects. For example, gold dust has a much lower density than car parts, so it will get assigned a higher freight class. Because items with a lower freight class are easier to handle, they cost less to ship than objects with a high freight class.

## Stowability

2

How your freight can be transported with other commodities. Flammable, perishable or hazardous freight is regulated and can't be shipped with certain materials. When thinking about stowability, consider how your freight is packaged. Crated or boxed items are usually stackable and easier to pack inside a cargo container or truck.

## Liability

3

Liability refers to the value of a commodity, the likelihood of theft or damage and the probability of the item causing damage to other freight during shipping. Greater risk results in a higher freight class (i.e. perishable items, dangerous chemicals).

## Ease of handling

4

When classifying freight, the level of care needed during transport is taken into account. Fragile items requiring special attention or have hazardous properties are considered a higher class. Size, weight and shape are also considered.



### Note:

The lower the density, the higher the freight class.

# How to determine your Freight Class.

Understanding the freight class of the items you are shipping is key to avoiding unexpected billing adjustments. If you are unsure of your shipment's freight class, we can help:

1. [Use our online freight class look-up tool](#). Scroll to the bottom of that page and click on the downward-facing arrow to the left of your item's category. Drill down until you find the freight class for your shipment.
2. [Calculate your freight class](#) using our online calculator.
3. Call (844) 212-7447 to speak to one of our shipping agents who can help walk you through determining your freight class.

For a deeper dive, check out our [blog on freight class](#) where we have some examples of the impact and what can go wrong when a little mistake here or there happens.





## Tips to make sure you get freight class right.

Let's recap, by following these tips, you can reduce billing adjustments for freight class.

**01**

Check with your 3PL to see if there is an assigned freight class for the commodity you're shipping. If there is, no need to calculate the density. Otherwise, density should be used to determine freight class.

**02**

Don't guess! When getting a shipping quote, provide accurate length, width, height and weight measurements for your cargo.

**03**

When measuring dimensions, always round up to the next whole inch.

**04**

Have your cargo weighed properly. If you don't own a freight scale, find a certified scale near you. You can Google "public scale near me."

**05**

As a last step, double-check the freight class with your shipping agent.



## Contact us.

We're here to help.

Get an [instant shipping quote](#) today and learn how FreightCenter can help you simplify your shipping. Our agents are ready to assist at **(800) 716-7608**.

