

# **Independent Contract Driver** **Small Package Courier**

## **Shipper Expectations & Safety Suggestions Guide**



## **Tips, Tricks and Procedures To Help Grow Your Business**

♥ Rob Slack / SameDay Consulting, 2001-2007

# Best Contracting Practices

- **Contracting the right person with the right characteristics, suggested criteria and skill set for the job**
  - 21 years old or older
  - Good driving record
  - Characteristics/Personality
    - Dependable, careful, courteous, someone that should be easy on the equipment, detail oriented, willingness to do other tasks as needed, can meet the physical requirements of the job
  - An acceptable 7 year Motor Vehicle Report
  - Clean criminal background check
  - Passed a substance abuse test
  - Other criteria as defined by Shipper



## Safety and Health Policy

All I/C Drivers should comply with the provisions of the OSHA Health Act of 1970. Therefore, any I/C Driver who, knowingly commits an unsafe act or creates an unsafe condition, disregards the safety policy, or is a repeated safety or health offender, should expect to have his / her contract terminated. The list below is an outline of some of the OSHA Health Act violations that affect the courier industry:

- 1) Drinking alcohol, / drug use prior to or during working hours
- 2) Fighting / Aggressive Behavior / Bad Language
- 3) Theft of any kind
- 4) Damage to shipper or consignee property
- 5) Removing barriers / guardrails and not replacing them
- 6) Engaging in dangerous horseplay

# Image Expectations by Shippers

- You must ensure that the impression that the shippers customers have is one of professionalism and value. I/C Drivers have more contact with the customer in person than any of the shippers representatives
  - **I/C Drivers should project a professional image**
    - Personal Appearance- you are representing the shipper!
      - Proper Dress code, neat, clean
      - Wear Logo shirt, if requested / negotiated
      - If wearing a hat, it must be product related or company logo
    - Personal hygiene maintained
      - Hair combed neat and trimmed
      - Facial hair neat and trimmed
    - Contract vehicle standards
      - Clean inside and outside- washed, litter free
      - No offensive tags or bumper stickers on the vehicle
    - Conduct at stops
      - No loud music
      - No personal cell phone usage inside the shipper or when onsite with customer
      - No tobacco use

## I/C Driver Expectations

- Consistently show up on agreed upon schedule and on time
  - If you elect not to provide services or delay services, contact your liaison no later than 6:30 a.m. with your status for the day.
- The I/C Driver must be valuable to the operation. This includes making on time deliveries to the customers.
- I/C Drivers can expect to have daily mileage of approximately 150-200 miles per day. This should flex up and down based on business needs
- Approach every delivery with a positive attitude
  - Friendly, Courteous, Thank the customer
- Treat each delivery with the utmost importance and urgency
- Properly prepare to handle deliveries
  - Proper documentation at hand
  - All the items- checked and double checked for accuracy
- Learn, understand and follow the dispatching process that the shipper is using

# Typical Dispatching for Hot Shot Deliveries

Typically there is a white board that would have columns for each I/C driver with their name and phone # at the top of the column. I/C Drivers would write the name of the accounts from the invoices they are delivering on the board in their column and the time they are leaving. When they return, they wipe the column clean, pick the next cart at the front of the line, and write the account names and time of departure and leaves for delivery.

**Cart 3 – Lowest priority and items in this cart are heading in a common direction**

**Cart 2 – Next highest priority and items on this cart are heading in a common direction**

**Cart 1 – highest priority and items on this cart are heading in a common direction**

**Park out and away from the buildings please.**

**Know what your customers want and exceed their expectations on every delivery!**

**Three things you must remember on every delivery:**

**Be friendly, courteous and Thank the customer...**

***They are your bread and butter!***

## IC / Driver Customer Relations

- **IC/Drivers must know/learn information on top accounts in order to exceed their customer service expectations.**
  - Key Contacts – primary/secondary
  - Driving directions/alternate routes for busy times
  - Specifics for serving the customers
    - When to pick up cores
    - Where to place the parts
    - Who signs the invoices
    - Where to park – (normally away from the building so you do not block bays or incoming customers)
  - Use diplomacy on those occasions when a misunderstanding or mistake has occurred – show interest in getting the mistake corrected
  - NEVER argue or show an attitude with the customer – let the shipping customer store team handle the situation
  - Involve the shippers designated manager if a situation appears to be getting out of hand – contact via 2-way in the delivery vehicle before leaving the place of business. It is important not to contact the shipper's store while inside the business you are delivering.

# Delivery Expectations

- **Customers expect their orders to arrive within 30 minutes and no more than 1 hour (for more heavily populated areas) from the time they place the order with the shipper**
  - Every effort should be made working with the shipper's dispatcher or management personnel to achieve these delivery times consistently- Understand that if they cannot beat their competition on delivery times, your business will suffer
  - Do not spend more than 5 minutes per stop (unless performing a large return that has been scheduled)
  - I/C Drivers should not spend more than 5 minutes for load and unload time (having orders organized by customer in a box or tote and use of carts for carrying multiple orders to and from the delivery vehicle should increase efficiency in loading and unloading time)
  - Deliveries should be made to meet customer needs; therefore, there may be times when deliveries are made after shipper closing time. We simply have to meet our customer's needs!

# Expectations for Order Accuracy

- **I/C Drivers should insure accuracy of shipment making sure all the order is complete prior to leaving for a delivery**
  - Read the tickets/invoices and validate for accuracy prior to departing on a delivery run
  - Looking over the invoice prior to leaving and account for items by placing a check mark by each item on the invoice
  - COD invoices should be highlighted for the driver to easily see that they should need to collect funds for this order for this account
  - Orders must be packed by customer using box, bag, tote or some other source to keep the order together and easy to load and unload
  - Double check the address especially accounts that operate multiple locations under one name
  - Have credit memo available with each delivery in case customer has a return item or core
  - Credit memos must be legible, dated correctly and signed appropriately
  - Must be familiar with how to handle returns from paperwork to placement of product in the returns holding area

# Expectations for use of Mobile Communication

- **I/C Drivers have Mobile communications devices available for the shipper to reach them when needed**
  - Expectation is for the I/C driver to have a 2-way radio for communicating with shipper
  - I/C Driver should call shipper when the following events occur:
    - Leaving the final drop off for a particular run
    - Leaving a warehouse after picking up parts to make sure an additional pick up is not pending
    - Problems with the order (don't wait until you return to the shipper, go to the vehicle and contact the shipper; not inside the business)
    - Delays (stuck in traffic, delay at a stop, etc.)
    - Emergencies
  - *No personal use of cell phones while inside shipper or onsite with customer*

## I/C Driver Safety Responsibilities

You also have some important responsibilities concerning safety. These are:

- The responsibility of always following the safety rules for every task you perform.
- The responsibility of helping other I/C Drivers recognizes unsafe actions or conditions they cause.
- The responsibility of asking about the safety rules you are not sure about.

## **GENERAL SAFETY RULES:**

- Read and follow any safety notices and other information posted.
- Observe and follow all safety instructions, signs, and operation procedures.
- Help your fellow I/C Drivers when they ask for assistance or when needed for their safety.
- Never participate in "horseplay". Horseplay that results in injury should not be covered by Occupational Accident Insurance.
- Clean up spills immediately.
- Wear personal protective equipment as required to reduce injury potential. Use gloves, back support belts, etc., as necessary.
- Never stand on chairs, furniture, or anything other than an approved ladder or step stool.
- Never use intoxicating beverages or controlled drugs before or during work. Injuries attained while under the influence should not be covered by insurance. Prescription medication should only be used at work with your Doctor's approval.

## **PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT:**

- Moccasins and shoes with open toes or high heels should never be worn.

### **MATERIAL HANDLING SAFETY RULES:**

As small package I/C's, you may encounter some heavy lifting situations. In the event that you do either as a courier or in your personal life...

- When lifting, lift properly. Keep the back straight, stand close to the load, and use your leg muscles to do the lifting, keeping the load close to the body. Never twist your upper body while carrying a load.
- When lifting heavy objects, utilize a two-wheeled dolly, or, ask for assistance from another worker.
- Inspect the object you are going to lift for sharp corners, nails, black widow spiders, or other things that may cause injury.
- Use gloves when handling rough or sharp materials.

## **HOUSEKEEPING:**

- Do not place boxes in aisles, stairways, or any designated path of travel.
- Stack material at a safe height so that material should not fall if bumped.
- Place all trash or scrap in places provided. Clean up all spills immediately.
- Report worn or broken flooring, stair treads, handrails, furniture, or other office equipment to the owners of the property.
- Smoking is permitted only in designated areas outside. Use ashtrays for disposing of butts. Do not throw butts on the ground.

**White Line Fever...Don't Ignore the Symptoms!  
It's just not a trucker's thing.**



It's the middle of the afternoon; you've been on the road all day. "Man, I'm tired." The monotonous lines on the road start to drift you into a sort of hypnotic trance. At this point it would feel so good to just close your eyes for a few seconds...DON'T DO IT! Pull off the road. The only real cure for White Line Fever is a little sleep, but if pulling over for a nap is not possible due to where you are on the road, there are some things you can do to try and snap out of the trance. Get a bite to eat, open the window, grab a coffee, stretch your legs, and turn on talk radio. If these things don't work, then you MUST pull off and rest your eyes. Don't be "Deadline Wise and Death Foolish!!!"

## **Cell+Maps+Paperwork+Motion=TROUBLE**

You're driving down the road and your cell phone rings. It's a dispatcher and he is looking for a POD on a job you did. You have to get over a couple of lanes because your exit is coming up, you think, but you really need to check your map. Sound familiar? As couriers, you tend to "multi task" while driving down the road. Is this a good idea? Of course not! Any rational human being understands that taking your concentration off the road for any task, even adjusting the radio, is putting yourself at risk.

When your vehicle is rolling you have an obligation to yourself and every other person on the road to pay attention to the road and the traffic around you. There are too many lousy I/C Drivers out there for you to be "Multi Tasking". You are a good driver; my grandmother isn't! Pull over if you need to "multi task". Once you are stopped you can do all those things while standing on your head and still be a safer courier.

### **Stairway Management How to Safely Climb Your Way to the Top.**

Stairways... YUK! There isn't a courier in the world that walks into a delivery location, sees a set of stairs and gets excited. If there is someone out there that does this, chances he may be a few cans short of a six-pack. Stairs are the arch nemesis of the courier. Trying to walk up a flight, two flights, 10 FLIGHTS, while schlepping some boxes is a royal pain in the butt. If you attack the situation right, hopefully it won't end in a pain in your back or knees or head!

When the inevitable staircase comes into play, don't try to conquer that mountain in one trip if it means the possibility of injury. Lighten your load and make the first trip. Deposit your first set of packages and go back down for the rest of the packages. Your back should thank you and maybe even your waistline!

### **Smart Stack...Boxes that Stay Put**



When you load your van do you try and keep all the boxes at an even level across the top? If you don't, you should. A level "horizon" of boxes is a lot less likely to shift and fall over than an uneven load. Every time you turn, stop or swerve... your boxes shift. If you don't have anything holding the boxes down, your boxes could slide forward and strike you while you are in motion. If you think it is hard to drive with a couple of three year olds in your back



seat, try and do it with a box of copy paper crashing into your back.

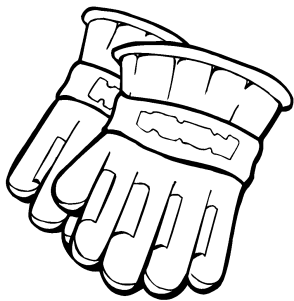
Loading a van is like building a puzzle. Fit the boxes together nice and tight and not too high. If you have boxes that are stacked higher than the back of your driver's seat and you have no box barrier, you are asking for trouble. If you have to take shipments that fill up your van, get a cage or buy a cargo net. Cap the boxes with a tarp, use bungee cords... **LOCK DOWN YOUR BOXES FOR SAFETY!**

## **Chin High Makes Sense... Don't Block Your Vision with that Extra Box.**

In Baseball "Chin Music" is when the pitcher throws you a high hard one inside. In the courier biz, chin music is when your chin is straining to stay above the box top line. It is a very bad idea to take a stack of packages that extend above your chin, obstructing your view. Carrying a load like this prevents you from seeing curbs, cracks in the sidewalk, gradual stairs, and small biting dogs! Don't risk your safety by trying to carry too much. You can hustle back to your truck and get those last few boxes without delaying your route for a long period of time. If you are running late and you need to get the load in quickly, use your handcart. **WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE CAN HURT YOU!**



## **Nylon Straps & Cut Fingers**



We've all done it...pick up that case of copy paper using the nylon strap that keeps it together. Hey, it saves you from bending over that extra 10 inches right? Well it might save you from having to bend all the way down, but it could end up leaving you with a nasty set of cuts on your hands.

If you find yourself transporting nylon strapped items often, get yourself a good pair of work gloves. A nice pair of leather gloves can save you lots of little aches and pains. The only down side is that the gloves should keep your hands so soft and smooth, your family might think you really don't work that hard!

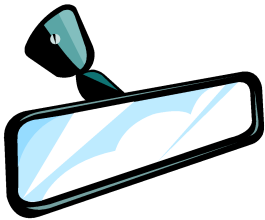
## Handcart Overload... Top of the Rack, Then Go Back

“Just two more boxes on the hand truck and I can make this delivery in one trip.” The only problem is, those two boxes took you two feet over the top back rack on your hand cart. No problem, right, you do it all the time. If it’s true you do it all the time, then you know, sometimes this can come back and bite you. You turn a little quick and the boxes topple. You hit a set of stairs and the cart is too heavy to pull safely. Your vision is blocked, so you didn’t see that homeless guy lying on the sidewalk. Be “Hand Cart Smart”. Load to the handle and no more.



## "Curb" Yourself... The Hidden Concrete Step

Curbs, you gotta love em’! You have a load of packages in your hands and you have to navigate the ever-present curb. Misjudge the height and you may trip. Guess it is there when it isn’t and you look like an idiot. Curbs can be anywhere. Obviously along the road, but also in parking lots, along driveways, around sidewalks, you name it. Curbs are the perfect reason why you should never have your vision obstructed. If you can’t see from your toes to five feet in front of you, something is wrong.



## Blind Spot Blunders

Don’t you hate those little cars on the road today? Some of these vehicles aren’t even 4 feet from pavement to roof. They might be fun to drive, but they create havoc to a courier. If you drive a van especially, these guys can sneak up on either side of you without you even knowing it. You take a quick look in your mirror; flip on your directional, start to change lanes and the BOOM! It’s insurance card time.

Blind spot management is something that needs to be done several times every minute. A safe driver learns to develop a constant scan from mirror to road to opposite mirror. You need to catch someone sneaking up on you before his or her lawyer starts to sneak up on your bank account, or worse, somebody gets hurt. Remember, Blind spot Blunders are always your fault!

## Bald Tires = Bad News

“I can get another 10K out of those tires, no sweat!” Wet leaves, snow, sand, ice, gravel, metal grate bridges... Your tires are the connection between the road and your life. Why risk your life to put off an inevitable expense for a few months. Good tires are good business. You



should get better gas mileage and you should be more likely to keep your vehicle under control when you encounter slippery surfaces. Get good tread, nuff said!

## **Night Glare is a Nightmare**

Wow, the new headlights on the market today can literally blind you if you look right into them. Not only that, but how many I/C Drivers out there cruise around with their high beams on, oblivious to the glare they are causing. How do you cope with these situations? There are certain “sunglasses” on the market that actually are designed to reduce night glare and brighten night vision (ask your ophthalmologist). You can also shift your main focus to the right side of the center of your vehicle hood, using the right curb or white line to maintain your position in the middle of the highway. Always use your night position on your windshield rear view mirror to reduce glare from behind. Your sun visor may also be of some assistance depending on the road geography. Bottom line; do whatever you can to reduce night glare.

## **Night Time Drowsiness**

Night falls and you’ve been on the road for it seems like days. Your eyes are getting heavy and you are finding it hard to keep your head up. Just like with White Line Fever, you need to fix this situation NOW! Pull off the road. The only real cure for night drowsiness is sleep, but if pulling over for a nap is not possible due to where you are on the road, there are some things you can do to try and wake up. Get a bite to eat, open the window, grab a coffee, stretch your legs, and turn on talk radio. If these things don’t work, then you MUST pull off and rest your eyes.

## **Slips, Trips & Falls... Watch Your Step!**

Ice, snow, wet leaves, sand, gravel, unseen steps, curbs, cracks in the sidewalk, your own two feet... all possible obstacles that can make you fall. Slips, trips and falls are the most common reason for on the job injury. Just as you should scan from side to side in your vehicle to locate blind spot issues, you should be scanning floor to door as you approach any delivery. Look three to five feet in front of you as you proceed, occasionally glancing up to keep your path in a safe direction. You’re not as young as you used to be and that pavement really hurts when it crashes into your elbow or your head.

**Always WATCH YOUR STEP!**



## Is Swerving Always the Right Move?

It's a reaction. You see that squirrel, that deer, that cat or dog, and you yank the wheel to the side. This sometimes can cost you your life. Although we all love animals, swerving to avoid a dashing creature can be hazardous to not only you, but also every vehicle around you. Now, I'm not saying you should go out there and start creating road kill as a part of your job. I'm saying you should have a complete picture of your surroundings and the other vehicles in your area before you even consider altering your path. Immediately you should start to apply your brakes, but not in such a fashion as to cause your vehicle to lose traction or control.

Slowing down should give the animal enough time to get out of your path. At the point you start slowing down, more than likely the animal has figured out that they should probably vacate the area. Give them the chance to get out of your way and if they can't, welcome to the food chain. Don't risk your life or someone else's for the life of a misguided animal.

## Back Lifting Safety

You should ensure that potential back injury risks are evaluated and controlled. This standard practice is intended to address comprehensively the issues of; evaluating and identifying back injury hazards, evaluating your lifting techniques and establishing appropriate guidelines. You are responsible to make necessary decisions to ensure you don't get hurt lifting where there is danger of serious personal injury.

### Workplace Back Safety:

You should review and evaluate these standard practice instructions. Effective implementation of your personal prevention program requires support from all the companies you deliver for. **You** are responsible for following proper work practices and control procedures to help protect your back and provide for your safety.

### **Back Disorder Risk Factors.**

- Repetitive and/or prolonged activities
- Bad body mechanics such as
  - Continued bending over at the waist
  - Continued lifting from below the knuckles
  - Continued lifting above the shoulders
  - Twisting at the waist while lifting



Lifting or moving objects of excessive weight

Prolonged sitting with poor posture

Lack of adjustable  
Chairs, footrests, body supports  
Poor grips on handles  
Slippery footing  
Frequency of movement  
Duration and pace  
Stability of load  
Reach distances  
Work height



**Safe Lifting Techniques.** You should use a pushcart or other material-handling device as necessary. You should also ask a co-worker for help if no device is available. The following situations show basic lifting techniques to avoid injury:

You should be using the following lifting and placing of load strategies:

Lifting or lowering from a high place

- 🎬 Stand on a platform instead of a ladder
- 🎬 Lift the load in smaller pieces, if possible
- 🎬 Slide the load as close to ones self as possible before lifting
- 🎬 Grip firmly and slide it down
- 🎬 Get help when you need it to avoid injury

Lifting from hard-to-get-at places

- 🎬 Get as close to the load as possible
- 🎬 Keep the back straight, stomach muscles tight
- 🎬 Push buttocks out behind you
- 🎬 Bend the knees
- 🎬 Use leg, stomach, and buttock muscles to lift -- not the back

Lifting drums, barrels, and cylinders

- 🎬 Use mechanical assists
- 🎬 Be aware that loads can shift
- 🎬 Get help if load is too heavy

Awkward objects

- 🎬 Bend the knees with feet spread
- 🎬 Grip the top outside and bottom inside corners
- 🎬 Use the legs to lift, keeping back straight

Shoveling

- 🎬 Make sure their grip and balance are solid
- 🎬 Tighten the abdomen as they lift
- 🎬 Keep the shovel close to the body
  - 🎬 Use the strength of the thigh muscles to bring them to an upright position



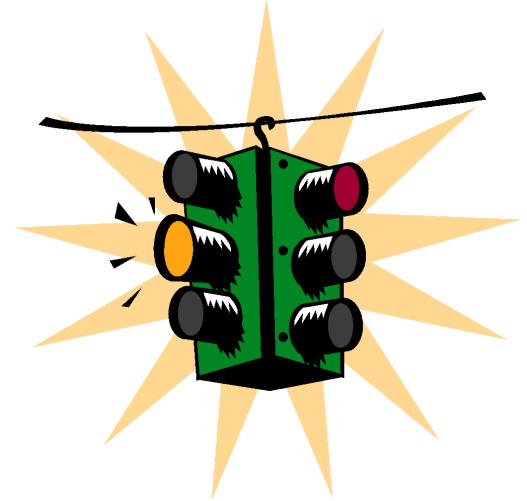
- Increase their leverage by keeping the bottom hand low and toward the blade
- General safety tips
- Don't lift objects over your head
- Don't twist the body when lifting or setting an object down
- Don't reach over an obstacle to lift a load
- Pace ones self to avoid fatigue

## **Motor Vehicle Operation**

Vehicles are to be operated in a safe manner consistent with local, state and federal laws. All accidents must be reported promptly according to procedures outlined below.

### **Responsibilities:**

1. You must possess a valid state driver's license.
2. You are properly trained in the operation of the vehicles.
3. You are physically qualified to operate the equipment.
4. You regularly inspect your vehicle and vehicle systems.
5. Inspect daily the vehicle before it is used. Items to be checked should include the battery, wheels, lights, horn, mirrors, steering, brakes and tires.
6. Do not use a malfunctioning vehicle if the defect impairs the safe operation or use of the vehicle.
7. Operate equipment safely and in accordance to operating instructions.



### **Operating Rules and Practices:**

- a. Safeguard pedestrians at all times. Do not drive a vehicle up to anyone standing in front of a stationary or fixed object (e.g., a bench or parked vehicle).
- b. Do not allow anyone to pass under any portion of any vehicle.
- c. Never allow anyone to ride "on" the vehicle.
- d. Maintain a safe distance from edge or ramps or platforms.
- e. Obey all safety signs and markers.
- f. Never exceed your vehicles rated capacity.
- g. Avoid sudden stops and starts with packages on board.

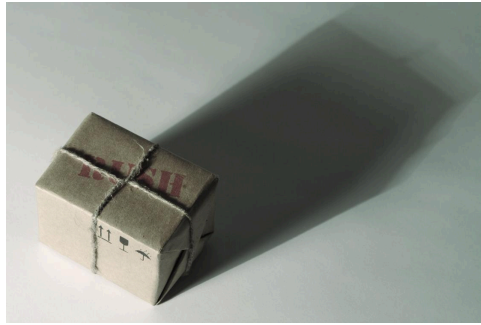
## Motor Vehicle Accident:

In cases of accident:

1. Stop immediately.
2. Take steps to prevent another accident at the scene.
3. Call a doctor or ambulance, necessary.
4. Notify police.
5. DO NOT sign any paper or make any statement that would indicate that you were at fault. You should have to sign the accident report filled out by the police. If the other guy was at fault, make that opinion known to the officers.
6. Obtain the name and address of each witness.
7. Provide your name, address, and upon request, show your operator's permit.
8. Make notes of the following:
  - a. Registration information for other vehicle(s) (owner's name, tag number and state, serial number, and vehicle description).
  - b. Information on other driver (name, address, operator's permit number, and expiration date).
  - c. Name / address of each person involved & extent of injury, if any.
  - d. Name and address of company insuring other vehicle(s).
  - e. General information such as location, time, measurements, weather, damage, etc.
9. Notify your occupational accident carrier ASAP
10. If the vehicle is unsafe to operate, have it towed to the nearest garage.
11. If you are injured, notify courier client ASAP.
12. Submit all reports to courier client dispatcher within one working day.
13. If you are injured have the police notify courier client dispatcher who should assume your responsibilities for reporting the accident.







**BE SAFE &  
GROW YOUR BUSINESS!**



♥ **SameDay Consulting 2001-2007**