

# Are you Confident You Have the Right Packaging Tape?

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For example, using a type of tape that creates a strong seal and prevents a shipping carton from opening unexpectedly in transit can keep your products from being damaged and eliminate the time and expense of dealing with returns. In other words, it is a choice that can have a direct impact on our bottom line.

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## Types of Packing Tape

There are two primary types of packing tape: plastic pressure-sensitive tape (PST) and water-activated tape (WAT).

PST is also referred to as poly tape, plastic tape, or simply packing tape. It is a clear, petroleum-based tape that has a pressure sensitive adhesive on the back of the film. It adheres to a surface based on the pressure applied as the strip is put in place. How well it adheres is based on several factors including:

- \* how much pressure is applied;
- \* how clean the surface is;
- \* and what environmental conditions are encountered in the packing and shipping process.

In today's market, this tape needs to work on recycled cartons and this presents a challenge. Recycled cartons have shorter fibers than new cartons, because they have gone through the production process multiple times. As a result, recycled cartons require more binders and adhesives to keep the fibers together. The shorter fibers and adhesive binders increase packaging failures and put your product and your profits at risk.

WAT is also called gummed tape, reinforced gummed tape (when fiberglass is embedded), Kraft tape, or paper tape. It is made of white or natural color paper and starch-based adhesive. Water is applied to the back of the tape (typically using a water-activated tape dispenser) before it is applied, and this activates the adhesive.

When the tape is placed on the carton surface, a blotting occurs between the adhesive and the carton surface. This process welds the tape to the surface of the box by penetrating the fibers and creating a permanent bond to the box. This happens with minimal pressure on new boxes as well as 100% recycled boxes and represents the most secure way to ensure your product makes it from point A to point B. A positive customer experience and your profit margin is preserved with WAT.

## Strategies for Assessing Your Packing Tape

Before making your next packing tape purchase, it pays to assess your current tape to ensure that the product you select meets all your needs. Below are some questions to ask about the tape you are using today.

- \* Does your tape create a strong seal? You want your tape to help protect the contents of a shipping carton and to deter thieves who are more likely to target a package with a questionable seal.
- \* Does your tape create a tamper evident seal? If a thief does gain access to the contents of a shipping carton, you want that fact to be clear when the recipient examines the package, so they can take prompt action to address the situation.
- \* Is your packing process safe? How your team seals cartons for shipping is important. Repetitive motion injuries can result in medical claims and lost productivity. Also, the use of electric WAT dispensers that aren't UL listed can be a risk.
- \* Is your tape strong enough to hold up to even the heaviest shipments? The failure of any seal on a carton is problematic. The failure of a bottom seal can be catastrophic.
- \* Does your tape maximize your ROI? If you need to use more strips of a less-effective tape, your "cost per shipped package" may be much higher than it ought to be.
- \* Is your packing process efficient? The time it takes to prepare a carton for shipping is important. A few extra minutes here and there, struggling to get a proper seal, can quickly add up.
- \* Can your tape increase brand awareness? Printing your logo, tagline, or other brand-building information on your packing tape can make more people aware of your organization and your offerings.

The answers to these questions will tell you if you need to consider switching to another type of tape. WAT meets all these criteria, making it a wise choice for any shipping operation.

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