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Shipping and Receiving Waterbased Coatings During Freezing Conditions

Shipping waterbased coatings during winter months in the northern regions of the country have always been challenging. This discussion will address how the majority of this freight gets shipped by LTL (less than truckload) common freight carriers, and the steps taken to get the load from the shipper's dock to its destination without freezing. "Freezing conditions" are interpreted by most

carriers as temperatures at or below 35°F (1.7°C). Shipping procedures followed are those of the Carbit Paint Co., LLC, and are meant to be informative for this article only.



Choose the freight carrier. The shipping department reviews the order and determines the best carrier or carriers for the destination. Choice is based on the following criteria: (1) Carrier provides "heat protection" service. (2) Carrier ships to destination directly or requires an interconnecting service. (3) Type of Heat Protection: heated trucks are better than "blankets." (The level of heat protection varies with carriers and can affect the cost.) (4) Carrier has "embargo areas" at origin, along route, or at destination. A freight embargo area is defined as "any event that prevents freight from being accepted or handled." In winter, this could be an area that is geographically marked by the carrier as a freeze zone and may drop that carrier from consideration for the load.

Call the freight dispatcher. Once the carrier is chosen, their freight dispatcher is called by the shipper's department and asked if his line takes freezable freight. If affirmative, the details of the shipment are discussed, and a quotation is requested by the shipper. The shipping department may call another freight line or two if the route is popular to see which carrier offers the best freeze protection for the lowest cost. The dispatcher will state what embargo areas, if any, will affect their routing and what delays in delivery to expect.

Lead time for freight pickup and delivery. Our order department recommends three to four days for lead time to advise customers what the above freezing window must be from pickup to destination. Furthermore, carriers will not pick up freezable freight if it is going to be housed in their warehouse over the weekend. For multi-day shipments, Carbit requests freight companies pick up Monday-Wednesday to avoid weekend storage issues. Not all freight terminals have adequate storage for freezable items in their warehouse or outside in heated trailers. Freezable items may be left on their dock overnight, in an unheated trailer, or stored in an unheated portion of the terminal. It takes some research by the shipping department to avoid using these carriers.



When the LTL Driver picks up freight. On arrival, the LTL driver will be briefed by the shipping department that the load is freezable and that he must provide the heat protection that his dispatcher listed in his quotation. The driver will review the shipper's bill of lading which will be clearly marked "Keep from Freezing." This document transfers title of the shipment to the freight carrier. After the driver signs the bill of lading, his company assumes responsibility and liability for the shipment until received by the consignee at destination.

Inspect waterbased coatings when delivered. Sometimes delays along the route caused by weather, rerouting, or mechanical breakdowns, plus abnormally cold temperatures, may cause the coatings to arrive frozen. It is the responsibility of the receiving company, particularly during winter months, to inspect for freezing all liquid coating shipments. The receiving department has the right to open up the containers and reject any product that is frozen. If the bill of lading is marked "Protect From Freezing" and the shipment shows evidence of being frozen, the best course of action is to tell the delivery driver that the shipment is being refused. DO NOT SIGN the bill of lading.

What if my receiving department accepts frozen material? Once the receiving department signs the bill of lading, they accept title for the shipment; the shipper is no longer responsible for the freight. A receiving department may notice frozen product after they have signed for the load. Customer service departments of the shipping company and receiving company should try to manage this situation the best they can. Some waterbased coatings like booth coatings are freeze-thaw stable and can freeze and then be thawed at room temperature to retain their properties.

Plan ahead. Companies that order freezable liquid coatings during the winter months can save themselves a lot of worry and extra freight cost if they order in advance. During the Christmas Holidays and early January, many plants schedule spray booth maintenance. They change their booth filters and apply a fresh coat of strippable booth coating. The happy maintenance manager is he who has his filters on hand and booth coating stored at room temperature ready to spray!

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