



Universal Traffic Service, Inc.
Universal Solutions for Supply Chain Management
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Freight Claims Guide

Recommendations for Successfully Resolving Your Claims

Freight claims management is one of the many value-added services you receive from Universal Traffic Service. Our Claims Analysts are experts at negotiating the freight claims process. If a carrier damages or loses your freight, rest assured that UTS will work on your behalf for the largest allowable resolution.

This document provides an overview of the claim process. Most importantly, it shares some tips to help ensure a favorable resolution. Should a carrier damage or lose your freight, the steps you take immediately following discovery can make the difference between a claim being paid or declined. We'll show you the right steps to take.

How to Initiate a Freight Claim

Upon discovery of damaged or lost freight, please notify Universal Traffic Service. We'll begin the investigation phase of the claim process. You are welcome to initiate a claim online or by contacting UTS. (Contact information is listed below.)

Please provide a contact person for the claim process. We will keep this person updated until the claim is resolved. Also please provide the following documents:

- Complete product invoice and/or credit memo – this is documentation of costs.
- Repair invoice/estimate (if repairable) – this should be itemized.
- Inspection report – if performed.
- Statement of loss – this will validate the claimant's position if product cannot be repaired and should be on your letterhead or direct from the manufacturer.

Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions. UTS will have access to the bill-of-lading and delivery receipts.



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TIP #1: Document Visible Damage on the Delivery Receipt

Always document all visible damage or loss on the delivery receipt before the driver leaves. Be specific. For example, “right corner of file dented” or “box torn open” or “shrink wrap not intact/ripped”. Make sure notation is reflected on all copies of the delivery receipt. Most drivers are required to immediately contact their terminal for an exception number which should be clearly documented on all copies as well. **DO NOT WRITE** “subject to inspection” only as this is viewed as concealed damage. Most exterior indications of damage should coincide with internal damage.

UTS recommends the following verbiage be included on the bill of lading as carriers will typically transfer this onto the delivery receipt.

*“Inspect for quality and quantity before signing delivery receipt.
Note all damage/shortage/mishandling at the time of delivery.”*

TIP #2: With Concealed Damage, Look to Prove Fault

Concealed damage is damage to your freight that is not visible upon delivery. Often it isn't discovered until hours or days after the freight has been delivered.

Concealed damage is the hardest claim to win. Carriers contend that the damage was caused by something or someone else until proven otherwise. The burden of proof then lies solely with the claimant to prove carrier mishandling and disprove improper packaging or handling on the part of the shipper or consignee. Without compelling evidence, carriers almost always decline claims for concealed damage.

General transportation guidelines dictate you have 15 days from the delivery date to notify a carrier once the damage or loss is discovered. The 15 day notification is merely a guideline and does not guarantee carrier liability.

Without compelling evidence, carriers almost always decline claims for concealed damage. In rare circumstances, carriers might offer partial restitution.



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TIP #3: Hold All Damaged Material Until Conclusion

Please keep damaged material in the original packaging at the original delivery site (unless being returned for mitigation) until conclusion of the claim. Conclusion is either a check in hand, written acceptance, or written declination.

When notified of damage, we will offer an inspection to the carrier involved. In most situations they will waive this offer if the value is under \$500, but the carrier reserves the right to inspect in all cases. If the material is disposed of, this could result in a declination or partial offer. Once a carrier has accepted liability, they are then entitled to retain the material as salvage. You can always amend your claim with an appropriate scrap/salvage value as a counter offer to further mitigate your claim.

TIP #4: Be Open to Mitigation

Mitigation is often a key factor in a successful claim. For example, if you were in a minor automobile accident, would you expect the insurance company to replace your car or repair the damage? The same holds true with freight claims. Repairs should be considered if the cost is lower than replacement. Some items are not repairable because of location/type of damage or a specialty item, which should be clearly stated with validation at the time of claim presentation. Once a carrier accepts liability, it must make the claimant whole either thru replacement or repair – the lesser of the two.

The Freight Claim Process

Claims typically run 45-120 days to resolution. We will send email updates every step of the way. We are here to help facilitate the process and welcome any questions or comments. Feel free to contact us directly or via our website at www.myUTS.net.

Your primary contact for claim investigation is:

Renee Anthony

Claims Manager

Email: ranthony@UTSnet.com

Phone: (800) 383-3024 ext. 1705

Fax: (616) 698-6894