Harvard University Mail Service Courier Guidelines: Transporting, Sorting, and Packing Library Materials

Guidelines for HUMS Couriers

Increased library service to the university community calls for the transport of books and other media between libraries. Transporting, sorting and packing bins properly will protect our collections.

Transporting Bins

- Bins should not weigh more than 50 pounds, and lids should close completely, without pressure. Do not accept bins that are over-packed.*
- Secure every bin with one plastic tie.
- Label bins with the name of the library to which the books are to be delivered or label them as MIXED. Place the label in the plastic holder on the end of each bin.
- Handle bins carefully. Stack bins in the truck. Do not throw them into the truck. Since the bins are not full, the contents will shift and shifting books may be damaged.

Sorting Books

- Stack books in the sorting bins. Do not throw them into the bins.
- Try to stack evenly. If stacks fall over, the books may be damaged.

Packing Bins

- Place a foam pad in the bottom of the bin.
- Pack the bin evenly, preferably with larger books on the bottom and smaller books on top.
- Place books on their spine or lay flat. Do not pack books on their fore edges.
- If packing books flat, place fore edges of the books toward the bin sides, with spines against each other.
- Be aware of paperback books and take care of them. They have no covers to protect them.
- Be aware of the weight of the bin. Bins should not weigh more than 50 pounds.*

* A scale with a LED screen that is connected to the weighing platform and can be placed within visual range (above, behind, next to) is an excellent way to monitor the weight of the bins as they fill. Conservation Services can assist with identifying appropriate equipment.
• Do not over-pack. Lids should close completely, without pressure.
• Place a Rain-Catcher (absorbent pad) on top of the books before closing the bin. The plastic side should be against the books, absorbent side up.
• Secure lids with one plastic tie at one end.
• Place a label in the plastic label holder at the end of each bin. The label should indicate the library to which the books are to be delivered or it should say MIXED.