

PROVIDING INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS WHICH OPTIMIZE SPACE &
ORDER FULFILLMENT WITHIN THE SUPPLY CHAIN

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Size Matters with the New Dimensional Weight Standards

In the last decade we have been bombarded with dramatic changes in our business and economic environment. Companies across all industries have faced the challenges of increased customer demands and have had to determine how to adjust their business to accommodate these demands. The shipping and logistics industries have not been immune to these challenges.

As many companies have focused on maximizing their space, shipping companies such as FedEx Ground and UPS are trying to do the same thing as it relates to the space available on their trucks.

Have you ever received a shipment you ordered from your favorite on-line retailer in a large box and wondered why the shipping was so inexpensive? It was because the shipment was priced based on the weight and not the dimensions of the parcel. With the unprecedented increase in ecommerce over the last several years' retailers have exponentially increased the number of single line item packages they are shipping. This increase has caused trucks to cube out of space before they weigh out and given the previous pricing model was based purely on weight, shippers are not able to maximize the space on their vehicles.

For example, a large box will take up more space in the shipper's truck and theoretically should be cost more. Ground shippers have come to realize that this pricing model should be adjusted and they have implemented Dimensional Weight measurements to arrive at a more cost reflective billing rate.

Dimensional Weight or Dim-Weight is the newly adopted process by which UPS and FedEx Ground have begun to charge customers for parcels that are shipped with ground vehicles. Air shipments have been billed this way since 2011.

Previously, charges were determined per weight of the package rounded to the nearest pound, or if the volume of the package measured over 5,184 cubic inches or 3 cubic feet, the package was charged using the Dim-weight of Length x Weight x Height /194.

The new Dim-Weight standard measurements are rounded to the nearest whole number in inches. The volume is calculated as Length x Weight X Height, which gives you the cubic volume in inches for the parcel. Once the cubic volume in inches is determined, that figure is divided by 166 to determine the Dimensional weight in pounds and any fractions are rounded to the next whole pound. The charges are determined by whichever figure is higher, the actual weight or the dimensional weight.

What does this mean and how does it affect you as a retailer? It likely means an increase in overall shipping costs. Reports have suggested that as much as one third of all domestic ground shipments being handled today will cost more by the change. *Continued on Page 2*



Dimensional Weight Standards (Continued)

What can you do to minimize these costs?

Right-Size your boxes: Today, there are a number of automated solutions to help you right-size boxes. By matching the shipping container size to each order, you minimize the use of packaging fill and avoid excess dimensional weight shipping charges. However, if you are shipping in a less automated environment, “right sizing” your shipping containers will also work to reduce the Dim-Weight.

Consider multiple shipping providers: Different shipping providers have different rates, so look into which is the most cost-effective for your business. For example, USPS uses a dimensional weight volume divisor of 194 so the weight you are charged will be less than Fed-Ex Ground or UPS. Evaluating which carrier and methods are best for your business is a quick and easy way to ensure you’re getting the best deal.

Dimensional Weight Standards have made packaging more important than ever. It’s no longer acceptable to send you products in any box available. Instead, retailers need to place more focus on this sometimes ignored aspect of the shipping process because size now matters.



There is no question that forklift batteries are a vital part to keeping your business moving. And with today’s ever-increasing lead prices, it doesn’t pay to continually purchase new batteries.

Even though forklift batteries are a major contributor to your lift truck’s life and productivity, the maintenance of these batteries is often a second thought until it is too late. When a lift truck battery is not properly maintained its life is greatly reduced and its run hours begin to get cut shorter and shorter. This will ultimately result in increased downtime and decreased productivity. However, with proper maintenance, you could increase battery life up to 25%.

Watering batteries is one of the most important tasks related to routine battery maintenance and if not done properly can lead to poor battery performance, shorter battery life, and equipment downtime.

As a lead-acid battery is used, water evaporates and needs to be replaced regularly. Neglecting to replace the water will shorten battery life and affect forklift motor brushes. Without proper battery maintenance, your operation could come to a standstill. So why aren’t batteries being maintained? The answer is simple: Not only has the importance of battery maintenance been poorly understood, but watering each battery by hand is a dangerous hassle that can take upwards of 20 minutes per battery.

During the last 20% of a battery’s charging cycle, the water in the electrolyte breaks down into hydrogen and oxygen gasses that bubble to the surface and escape through the vent caps on each battery cell. The result, after repeated charge cycles, is an incremental dehydration of the electrolyte. Therefore, H₂O must be replenished periodically by watering the battery.

Your Guide to Safe and Effective Battery Watering Methods.

5 Tips To Help Make Sure You Are Running At Optimal Levels

This article was provided by EnerSys.

CAUTION: Only those personnel properly trained in the watering of lead acid batteries should be allowed to do so.

When watering a battery, wear a face shield, plastic or rubber apron and gloves. Some general rules to be followed, not only during battery watering, but at all times where a motive power battery is concerned: do not smoke, use an open flame or create arcs or sparks in the vicinity of a battery. Only charge a battery in a well-ventilated area with the cover of the battery or compartment raised for maximum ventilation. Remember that motive power batteries are electrically live at all times, regardless of their state of charge.

“Proper maintenance can increase your battery life by 25%”

The need to add water may vary from weekly to quarterly depending on application, battery temperature, and battery design. To extend this interval to the maximum period possible, follow these steps:

1. Adjust watering gun to fill to maximum possible height, or use a single point watering system to assure consistent levels are reached in all cells.
2. Water while the battery is in finish-rate charge and gassing; ideally.
3. Do not add water until actual visual inspection shows top of separators/plates is visible.
4. A Battery Water Monitor light is an excellent way to indicate when water is needed.
5. Once a repetitive routine is established, water your battery at that interval.

Overall, battery maintenance is a critical element to keeping your lift truck fleet up and running at an optimum level. This publication is intended to provide you with some tips and information on how to properly perform battery watering.

To download your free guide to battery watering please visit www.associated-solutions.com/about-contact/white-papers.php



Upcoming Events

Loyola Supply Chain Leadership Conference

About: This one-of-a-kind event will bring together supply chain experts and professionals from a wide array of backgrounds and industries to discuss today's hot supply chain topics. With a broad array of educational sessions, product demonstrations, solution applications and peer-to-peer networking opportunities this is a can't-miss event for every supply chain leader.

Location: Associated Corporate Headquarters, Addison, IL

When: Thursday, June 4, 2015

Register: <https://www.associated-solutions.com/about-contact/upcoming-events.php>

In the Press

Associated Receives MHEDA's MVP Status

Associated has been awarded the prestigious MVP (Most Valuable Partner) Status for 2015 in a program from the industry's trade association, MHEDA (Material Handling Equipment Distributors Association). To be among the less than 5% of the association's membership earning the award, Associated successfully demonstrated a commitment to business excellence, professionalism and good stewardship.

This is the fourth consecutive year that Associated has been awarded MVP status.

To view the entire press release please visit our website at: www.associated-solutions.com/our-difference/

Creating A Differentiated Customer Experience Starts From Within

As technology and social media evolves so does the customer's expectations. As customers have the luxury of finding a variety of quality products with simply a mouse click, competing companies are required to go beyond quality and price, creating an experience based in the customer's reality.

To successfully create an experience for your external customers you must examine your internal team's current capabilities and practices.

Ideally, building a strong team begins at the hiring process, screening candidates to ensure they meet not only the technical aspects but that they possess the soft skills required to deliver an exceptional experience. Although new hire screening is key to building a solid team you must understand what is happening now through an evaluation of your existing team. Taking a hard

look at your team and determining how they interact with one another will tell if your company has the ability to deliver an exceptional experience. If your internal team works in silos, struggles to show respect for one another or fails to understand that caring for one another is fundamentally caring for your external customers - then your team most likely struggles to provide a consistent exceptional experience to your external customers. Negative internal relationships severely impact how well you perform and determines how your external customers are treated.

To better understand your team's success see the experience through the only eyes that matter your customers by simply asking for their opinions. Gain an understanding of your business through a year-over-year comparison of your current customer base determining decreases or loss. Develop a task force responsible for contacting those customers,

using the data to implement change where needed. New customers are an opportunity for your team and company to stand out amongst your competitors. Develop a program which identifies new customer life cycles, preferred channels of communications and a method to successfully "hand-off" a customer from one department to another. Implement a process which periodically contacts new customers obtaining their perspective of the relationship. Share the data from lost business and new customer perspectives with ALL members of your internal team to heighten awareness and elicit growth amongst the team.

The internal transformation will take time, a tremendous effort and commitment by everyone in the organization. However, at the end of the day, hiring the right people and successfully transforming your team moves you one step closer to the coveted brand loyalty sought by every organization.

Focus On Safety... The Importance of Safety Committees

If your company is like most, the work day is filled with tasks and meetings and the thought of adding a safety committee meeting to your schedule is daunting at best but it is an important element to reducing incidents and injuries within the workplace.

Safety committees should have representatives from both labor and management inclusive of all departments, shifts and outside branches. This diversity of input will help guide and grow a company's safety culture with attainable safety initiatives. The committee needs to "walk the talk" of its safety program by having clear and defined roles, responsibilities and goals.

Safety committees should seek to achieve the following goals:

1. Employee training programs such as Forklift certification, Haz-Com, etc.
2. Building safety and security such as emergency evacuation plans and building access points

3. Employee Health and Safety such as first aid and CPR programs

Key elements of a safety committee:

- Hold meetings on a regular basis and allow members to attend during their normal work hours.
- Agenda need to be specific, published in advanced and time-efficient.
- Minutes need to be kept and distributed for review and further input.
- Keep all employees informed of committee recommendations and initiatives.
- Committee needs full cooperation and enforcement from top management.
- Goals should be measurable and achievable.
- Incidents need to be reviewed for trending and corrective action recommendations.

Common safety committee mistakes:

- No clearly defined responsibilities
- No planned meeting dates for each quarter
- No defined chairperson to lead the group
- Micromanaged tasks



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Upcoming Associated University Events

Topic: Fleet Management - Do You Know How Much Your Fleet Is Really Costing You?

Date: Wednesday, May 20, 2015

Time: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM CDT

To Register: www.associated-solutions.com

About Associated

Celebrating over 50 years of providing customers with innovative solutions that optimize space and order fulfillment operations within their supply chain, Associated understands that handling materials in the supply chain should be more than material handling. By utilizing their unparalleled experience and industry best practices they are able to evaluate current methods and processes for storage, order fulfillment, labor and equipment utilization and recommend practical strategies to enhance their effectiveness and reduce overall cost.

Featuring leading-edge engineering, fleet optimization and labor management solutions to complement industry-leading sales, service, rentals and parts, Associated has been the recipient of multiple awards in recognition of being a premier organization in the supply chain industry.

Our Locations:

- Illinois: Addison, Bloomington
- Indiana: Indianapolis, Fort Wayne, South Bend
- Iowa: Ankeny
- Minnesota: Eagan

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