STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

Freight Damage Claims SOP

Document no.	SOP-LOG-004
Revision	1.0
Owner	Logistics Claims Coordinator
Effective date	September 15, 2026
Review cycle	Every 12 months

1. Purpose

To recover the value of freight lost or damaged in transit by filing accurate, well-documented claims with carriers or insurers and tracking them to resolution.

2. Scope

Applies to claims for freight damaged or lost while in the custody of a carrier, from initial discovery through claim settlement. Warehouse-internal damaged goods handling is covered by a separate SOP.

Definitions

Concealed damage	Damage to freight that is not visible until the packaging is opened after delivery, as opposed to visible damage noted at receipt.
Claim filing deadline	The time limit set by the carrier's terms or contract of carriage within which a formal claim must be filed.
Bill of lading exception	A written note on the bill of lading at delivery describing visible damage or a shortage.
Subrogation	The process by which an insurer that pays a claim takes on the right to recover the loss from the responsible carrier.

3. Responsibilities

Receiving Clerk	Notes visible damage on the bill of lading and reports it immediately at delivery.
Logistics Claims Coordinator	Documents damage, files claims with carriers, and tracks them through resolution.
Logistics Operations Manager	Reviews high-value claims, approves write-offs, and manages the carrier relationship on disputed claims.
Finance Analyst	Records the claim receivable, reconciles settlement payments, and reports unrecovered losses.

RACI matrix

Activity	Receiving Clerk	Logistics Claims Coordinator	Logistics Operations Manager	Finance Analyst
Note damage at delivery	R/A	I	-	-
Document and file the claim	C	R/A	I	I

Activity	Receiving Clerk	Logistics Claims Coordinator	Logistics Operations Manager	Finance Analyst
Track claim status with carrier	-	R/A	I	-
Escalate a disputed claim	-	R	R/A	I
Record settlement or write-off	-	R	A	R

R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed

4. Materials and PPE

Materials, tools and systems

- Claim filing form (carrier or standard form)
- Bill of lading with any noted exceptions
- Photos of damaged freight and packaging
- Original invoice or value documentation
- Claims tracking log or TMS claims module
- Carrier contract or tariff terms

5. Procedure

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.1	**Note visible damage at delivery** If damage is visible when freight arrives, write a specific description of it directly on the bill of lading before signing, and have the driver initial the exception. **Checkpoint:** Visible damage is described in writing on the bill of lading and initialed by the driver before it is signed.	Receiving Clerk	☐
5.2	**Photograph the damage immediately** Photograph the damaged freight, its packaging and any shipping labels before it is moved or unpacked further, capturing multiple angles.	Receiving Clerk	☐
5.3	**Report concealed damage promptly** If damage is discovered only after unpacking, report it to the claims coordinator the same day it is found and preserve the original packaging and all packing materials. **Warning:** Do not discard packaging or dunnage from a shipment with concealed damage; carriers often require it to support the claim.	Receiving Clerk	☐
5.4	**Gather claim documentation** Collect the bill of lading, delivery receipt, photos, original invoice or value documentation, and the purchase order for the affected freight.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐
5.5	**Check the claim filing deadline** Confirm the filing deadline in the carrier's contract or tariff terms and calendar the claim to be filed well before that date.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐
5.6	**Complete and submit the claim** Complete the claim form with a description of the damage or loss, the claimed amount, and attach all supporting documentation, then submit it to the carrier or insurer.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐
5.7	**Log the claim in the tracking system** Record the claim number, filing date, carrier, claimed amount and expected response date in the claims tracking log.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐

Step	Task	Owner	Done
5.8	**Follow up on outstanding claims** Follow up with the carrier on any claim without a response by the expected date, and update the tracking log with the latest status. **Checkpoint:** Every open claim past its expected response date is followed up on within the same week.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐
5.9	**Review a denied or partial offer** If the carrier denies the claim or offers a partial settlement, review their stated reason against the documentation and decide whether to accept, negotiate, or escalate.	Logistics Claims Coordinator	☐
5.10	**Escalate a disputed high-value claim** For a high-value or repeatedly denied claim, escalate to the logistics operations manager to decide on further negotiation, formal dispute or accepting the loss.	Logistics Operations Manager	☐
5.11	**Record the settlement** Once a claim is settled, record the settlement amount and date, and pass the details to finance to reconcile against the original claimed loss.	Finance Analyst	☐
5.12	**Review claim trends by carrier** Summarize claim frequency, value and resolution outcomes by carrier on a regular schedule to inform carrier selection and contract negotiations.	Logistics Operations Manager	☐

6. Quality checks

- Visible damage is always noted in writing on the bill of lading before signing.
- Every claim is filed with complete documentation before the carrier's filing deadline.
- Claims without a carrier response are followed up on the same week they become overdue.
- Settlement amounts are reconciled against the original claimed value by finance.

7. Records

- Bills of lading with noted exceptions
- Claim forms and supporting photos
- Claims tracking log
- Settlement and write-off records

8. KPIs

- Percentage of claims filed before the deadline
- Average claim resolution time
- Claim recovery rate (settled amount versus claimed amount)
- Claim frequency by carrier

9. Common mistakes

- Signing a delivery receipt clean when damage was actually visible.
- Discarding packaging from a concealed damage shipment before it is inspected.
- Missing the carrier's claim filing deadline due to slow documentation gathering.
- Not following up on a claim until months after it was filed.

10. Revision history

Revision	Date	Description	Reviewed by
1.0	September 15, 2026	Initial release	Ilia Pirozhenko

Approval

Prepared by	Approved by	Date

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