

Tips to make mailing gifts easier

Here are some tips from local sources to make packaging less of a headache this year!

The Shipping Depot in Plymouth can make holiday packaging virtually painless with the services they offer. If you're unable to get out of the house, or have too many packages that need shipping to squeeze into your car, for a nominal fee they'll send a driver to your home to pick them up! They'll even package your gifts for you.

If you're a do-it-yourselfer, owner Jerry Olson recommends using two inches of packaging materials. "That's the biggest problem I see," he says. "People package [things] wrong. Pictures and glass should be professionally done. If you don't do it right,

it won't make it!" Olson suggests the following packaging tips for worry-free delivery of your holiday gifts:

- Don't use brown paper to wrap packages in, the paper rips in the process. Instead, use a plain cardboard box with an easy-to-read address label.

- Don't use string, it gets torn up in the postal machines. Two-inch wide plastic tape works great. (Much better than masking tape.)

- Enclose an additional label or note inside with the addressee and recipient clearly marked, just in case.

- When mailing to California, ship by the 16th just to make sure it will arrive on time — in general, allow five days for a ground-delivered package; but to be really

safe, allow a few weeks for delivery.

"People mostly use UPS...Federal Express is more expensive. UPS offers more options, air or ground delivery," Olson says. The Shipping Depot offers UPS, Federal Express and Airborne services to their customers.

Ben Hatch of Packaging Plus Services in Farmington Hills shared the following UPS-specified packing tips.

- Use a corrugated carton.

- Protect it inside. It is very important to pack several inches of your cushioning material in the bottom of the carton. Then, wrap each item separately, and place them in the center of the carton. Now, stuff cushioning material firmly around, over and between the

items to lessen the chance of damage.

- Close it securely: use a strong tape — two inches or more in width. Do not use masking tape, string or cellophane tape. (These tapes do not provide the strength necessary for good closures.)

- Use proper labeling: to insure proper delivery, keep these important points in mind when addressing your package: for added protection, place a duplicate label or other delivery information inside the package.

By following these simple suggestions, you can do your part to insure the safe arrival of your parcel, on time and in one piece! Make gift-giving to loved ones easier on yourself this year and package them correctly. —By Lisa Buczko

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