

SUGGESTED PROCEDURES: SHIPPER LOAD & COUNT, SHIPPER SEALS

BY GEORGE CARL PEZOLD

We receive a lot of questions involving shipper's seals. Here are some recommendations and procedures for typical sealed "Shipper Load & Count" shipments (where driver is unable or not permitted to observe count and condition of the product).

At time of shipment:

- Only high quality seals should be used (tamper proof, etc.)
- Seals should be properly attached upon completion of loading by the shipper's employee, not the carrier's driver
- Seal number(s) should be recorded on the bill of lading or shipping document
- If there are multiple stop-offs, driver should be provided with additional seals and instructions to have the consignee attach a new seal upon partial unloading and note the new seal on the bill of lading or shipping document
- Drivers should be clearly instructed not to break or remove seals at any time, unless required by governmental authority, accident or equipment breakdown, at which time carrier should request instructions from shipper for replacing seals

At time of delivery:

- Seal numbers should be checked against the shipper's seal numbers; seals, doors, locks, etc. should be inspected for possible tampering
- Only the consignee should be permitted to break or remove a seal
- Any observable discrepancies (damage, shortage, load shift, etc.) should be promptly recorded and pictures taken, and documented
- Deviations from route, unusual delays or events should be documented
- If possible, the product should be unloaded and inspected by an independent inspector or quality control employee for any evidence of shortage, damage to packaging, contamination, presence of foreign substances, etc. and a report made.
- If the shipment is rejected without unloading and inspection, shipper and consignee should promptly be notified and disposition instructions should be requested (salvage, return to shipper, etc.)

Upon Return to Shipper (or third-party for disposition)

- Time is of the essence and this should be done as quickly as possible
- Upon return the product should be unloaded and inspected by an independent inspector or quality control employee for any evidence of shortage, damage to packaging, contamination, presence of foreign substances, etc. and a report made.
- Based on the inspection a determination should be made as to whether the product is fit for human consumption and/or its intended purpose, salvaged or destroyed, with the reasons for such determination.