

## ~ Wrapping and Packing Steins for Shipment ~

by Walt Vogdes



When sending a stein by mail or with a shipping service like UPS or FedEx, you need to wrap it carefully to prevent damage. This article discusses various aspects of shipping steins, and gives a pictorial guide for one technique. Here are some important points to keep in mind:

- always place your name, telephone number or email address inside the stein
- the stein must be securely packed inside the box to prevent shifting in transit
- the lid must not have a chance to twist or bang against the rim of the stein
- the thumblift must be protected from being bent or broken
- when shipping multiple items, they must be protected from each other (!)
- light-weight Styrofoam peanuts or foam boards are excellent packing materials (crumpled newspaper is also good, as long as it is protected from getting wet)
- packing material should be firmly packed around the stein - leave no wiggle room!
- box-in-a-box packaging is much more secure than relying on a single box
- ensure that there is at least one inch of packing material between the outer box and its contents (preferably two inches)
- don't reuse a box which has been weakened by previous damage
- tape the box edges and openings from corner to corner, and side to side (this is quite strong, and also protects against water entering the package)
- always put your return address on the outside of the package
- mark the box as "Fragile" on all sides

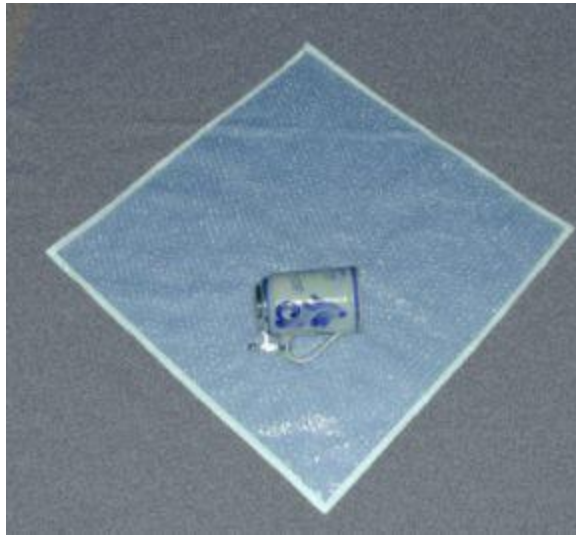
The following topics are discussed individually (click to jump to the topic, or just keep reading the article):

- [Wrapping](#) each stein to provide the basic protection and secure the lid
- [Packing](#) the stein in a box
- [Box-in-a-box](#) packing - the best way!
- [Shipping multiple steins](#)

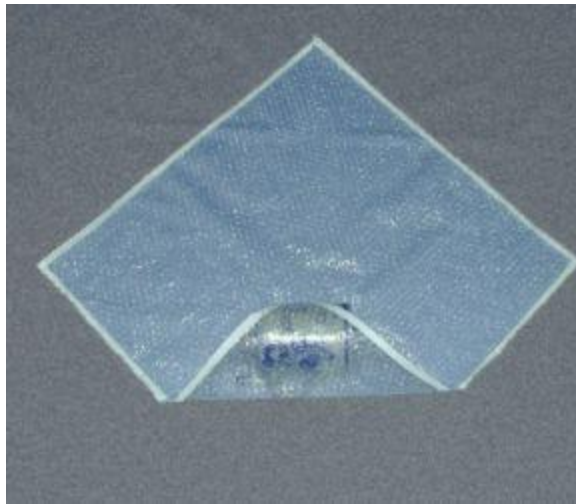
### **Wrapping:**

Before beginning to wrap a stein, some people add a thin piece of foam or other padding between the lid and the upper rim, but keep it thin so that the padding itself does not create an opportunity for the lid to be bent if it is pressed firmly against the stein. Another technique that is sometimes used (but not generally recommended) is to secure the lid to the body with masking tape. The problem with this is that sometimes paint will come off when the tape is removed! The technique shown below uses the wrap itself to secure the lid, no tape or other restraint is needed. Also, don't bother with Styrofoam peanuts or other padding inside the stein. When the stein is wrapped, those peanuts provide no value whatsoever.

The first step in preparing a stein for shipment is to wrap the stein itself in some sort of padding. Here I used a 24" by 24" piece of 1/4" bubblewrap, a size which works quite well for half-liter steins. (I taped the sides of the bubblewrap simply to make the photos clearer.) Place the bubblewrap flat on a table or on the floor, with the stein off-center and the handle facing toward one corner of the wrap. The rest of the process is just the same as a butcher wrapping a steak!



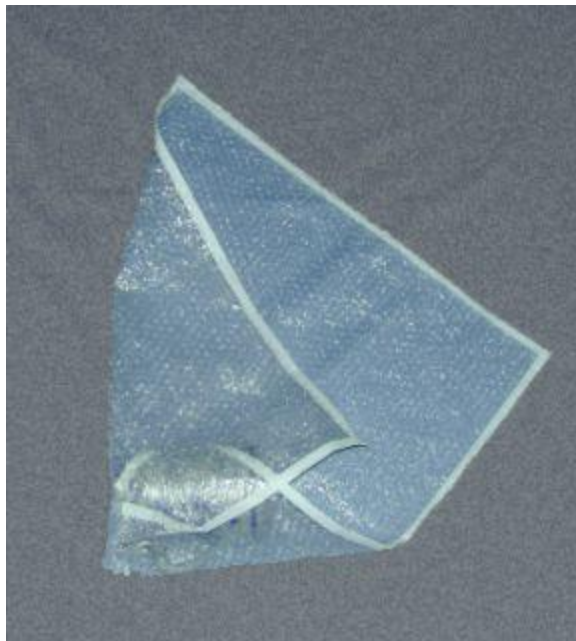
Wrap the corner of the bubblewrap over the body of the stein so that it meets the bubblewrap on the other side. You may have to re-position the stein in order to get this adjusted to your liking.



Now tuck the bubblewrap against the lid of the stein, and fold the left corner of the bubblewrap over the body as shown at right. Adjust the angle so that the folded left side of the bubblewrap is approximately at the angle shown.

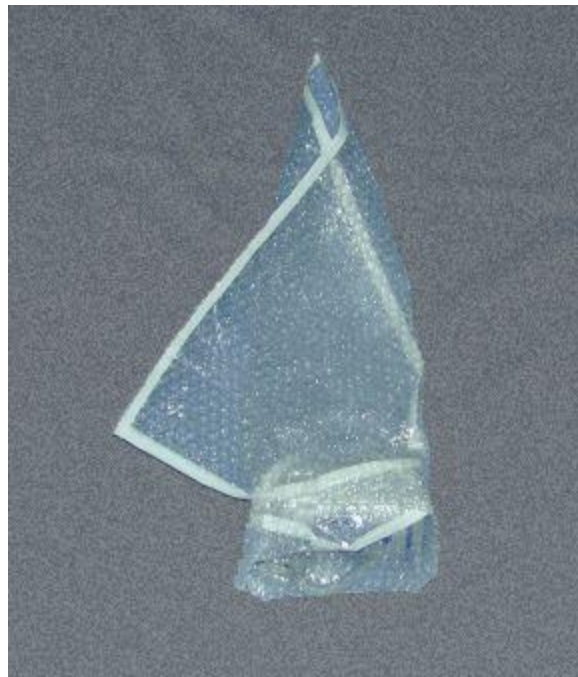
This step has the important feature of securing the lid of the stein to the body so it won't bang around during shipping.

Note that the stein itself is still in the same place and same position as when we started.



Now tuck the bubblewrap against the base of the stein as you fold it over the stein from the right side.

Again note that the stein is in the same place and same orientation. It now has bubblewrap across the lid and base as well as all around the body.



Finally, roll the stein away from you (toward the top of the illustration above), wrapping the bubblewrap around the body as you do so.

In this illustration the stein has been rolled once, placing the handle at the top of the photo, with the remaining tail of bubblewrap pulled forward and ready to be secured with a single piece of tape. The "tail" of bubblewrap appearing to the left in this photo can be used to provide additional cushion for the thumblift.



The "wrap" above may be all that is needed if you are simply packing steins away for storage, or are transporting them yourself to a chapter meeting. But if you plan to ship them, this is only the first step. [\[return\]](#)

### **Packing in the box:**

Steins which are loosely packed and allowed to shift during shipping are likely to be damaged (and it is the fault of the packer, not the shipper!). Steins without sufficient padding between the contents and the outer box are also likely to be damaged. These are the two most critical factors in packing your steins.

Be sure to select a large enough box to allow at least one inch of packing material between the wrapped stein and the top, bottom and sides of the box. This is critical! This packing is what will protect your stein if (when) the box is dropped or hit by something else. Be sure that there is sufficient space for packing above the tip of the thumblift, as this is particularly vulnerable.

Stuff the packing material around the wrapped stein tightly - not so tightly that the sides of the box bulge out, but tightly enough to be absolutely certain that the wrapped stein will not be able to shift around inside the box during shipping. Styrofoam peanuts between the lid of the wrapped stein and the box will provide cushioning for the thumblift.

If you are shipping a stein and a detached lid, wrap them both separately and pack them in a way that there is sufficient packing material between them that they will not touch each other if jostled during shipping.

Tape the box lid tightly. If it bulges too much, remove a little bit of packing material. Shake the box to satisfy yourself that it is tightly packed. [\[return\]](#)

### **Box-in-a-box:**

The technique of packing one box inside another offers far greater protection than relying on a single box, *as long as there is sufficient space and packing material between the boxes!* This not only ensures that there is more packing around your stein(s), but the flat sides of the inner and outer boxes spread any impact over a wider surface, lessening the likelihood of damage. The biggest objection to using box-in-a-box is probably the large size of the outer box, but the added protection makes it well worthwhile. (My local post office will not insure a fragile shipment unless it is packed box-in-a-box.) [\[return\]](#)



### **Shipping multiple steins:**

Why send one when you can send two or more? It's certainly cost-effective to combine shipment of multiple items in one package, but you need to be careful about the packaging. The most secure way is to use the box-in-a-box technique, where each item is in a separate inner box. When you do this, be sure to place padding between the boxes, so one does not damage the other during transit. The biggest disadvantage to this is that multiple inner boxes quickly demand a HUGE outer box. When faced with this problem, you can pack multiple pieces into a single (large) inner box, being careful to ensure that they are padded from each other (and from the sides of the box) with tightly stuffed packing material. This may be easiest to do if the wrapped steins are placed in the inner box in an upright position, adjusted for best spacing, and then Styrofoam peanuts stuffed firmly between them. Adjust the amount of padding on top of the steins so that the lid of the box is tight, but not bulging, when closed. [\[return\]](#)

### **Conclusion:**

No matter how well you prepare your steins for shipping, if the package falls off the back of the truck on an Interstate highway and it is hit by a gasoline tanker, it's going to be a write-off. Thankfully this is VERY uncommon. All you can realistically do is pack your steins so that they will survive the normal bumps and bruises of shipping, plus a margin of error for the occasion when they receive some extra rough handling. If you follow the suggestions in this article, your steins should be delivered safely.