

AV Packaging Test Committee

Testing Goal: Determine best practice for packing DVDs, CDs, and audiobooks into green bags to send through the state courier.

AV Packaging Test Points of Consideration:

- Both A/V items and their protective cases should be protected from breakage.
- Library staff should not be required to spend an inordinate amount of time to pack and unpack A/V items.
- The cost of packaging should be weighed against the cost of replacing damaged items and cases.

Method:

62 DVDs tested, 58 single DVDs, 4 multiple DVDs (2, 2,4 and 5).

777 Total Transits

0 Discs Damaged

22 Cases Damaged

Test Results:

Packaging Type	Cardboard	Packed with packing materials ¹	No Padding	Padded Envelope in Green Bag	Between Two Books	Small boxes	Overall
Number Broken	13	2	4	2	1	0	22
Total Items in Test	25	9	7	7	7	7	62
Percentage Broken	52.00%	22.22%	57.14%	28.57%	14.29%	0.00%	35.48%
Average Transits Before Breakage	5.08	5.5	4.5	11.5	8	N/A	6.92

¹ Paper, Bubblewrap, or Plastic

Results Summary: ‘No Padding’ and ‘Cardboard’ received the highest percentage of breakages, which could be expected. ‘Small Boxes’ received no breakages. Among the remainder, ‘Between Two Books’ performed the best, followed by ‘Packed with packaging materials’, and ‘Padded Envelope’”. The small sample sizes among some of the methods may have skewed the results.

System Survey Results:

Packaging Type	Packed with Paper, Bubblewrap, or Plastic	Padded Envelope in Green Bag	Between Two Books
Average Ranking (1st, 2nd, or 3rd place - lower is better)	2.5	1.75	1.75

Results Summary: Participating systems were asked to rank their favorite methods, considering ease of use and staff time. ‘Padded Envelope’ and ‘Between Two Books’ received the highest rankings. All systems expressed a dislike for Small Boxes and Cardboard, given staff packaging time.

Recommendations:

Since allowing free-form responses in 2010, AV lending between systems has consistently been at the top of requests from patrons. Given that we have over 1 million AV items among PINES libraries, we felt that it was important to address the potential for a state-wide AV packaging protocol. Additionally, we found that the packaging testing could inform packaging methods for AV returns between systems, which accounted for 50,733 transits in FY21.

‘Padded Envelope’ and ‘Between Two Books’ seem the most viable option, with points to recommend either. ‘Between Two Books’ is theoretically free, as AV items can be sandwiched between items already being sent to receiving libraries. However, the availability of books sent to receiving libraries is not guaranteed. ‘Padded Envelopes’ are a very easy to use method, with envelopes being able to be reused repeatedly throughout the testing process.

If padded envelopes are used statewide, we estimate that initial demand would be around 4300 AV items between systems per month. Given that number as an assumption, we would recommend purchasing 5000 padded envelopes for the whole of PINES. We

might be able to get better pricing, but a recent quote estimate has 5000 envelopes at \$1200 total, so around \$20 per system on average, without accounting for a circ ratio for distributing costs.

Given the relatively low price of entry, our recommendation would be for padded envelopes to be utilized for a statewide AV lending program, with those padded envelopes being placed between two books whenever possible to increase durability. Systems might expect DVD case breakage at a rate that has yet to be fully determined, but breakage of the actual DVD should be rare. Given the consistently high patron demand, even during times of streaming services, this seems like a low price to pay to meet the needs of our patrons.

For Further Investigation: Audiobooks and music CDs were not included in this testing process.