



These guidelines are designed to ensure the safe, accurate, and efficient return of Cisco products for Service and Product RMAs. Adhering to these instructions is crucial to prevent delays, processing errors, and potential loss of your returned items.

1. Product Condition and Eligibility for Return

- **Return Condition:** The product being returned must be in the same physical condition as it was when removed from your network. It must be packaged appropriately to prevent any damage during transit.
 - **No Scrap/Recycling Returns:** Only products labeled as returnable are eligible for RMA return processing. Otherwise, please refer to the information on the Cisco Product Recycling website for information on customer return solutions for end-of-life products. Cisco will not refund unnecessary shipping and processing fees for these items.
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2. Packaging Standards: Protecting Your Return

Proper packaging is paramount to prevent damage and ensure your return is processed correctly.

- **Preferred Packaging (Original):** Whenever possible, use the original Cisco box and packaging in which your equipment was initially sent and received. This packaging is designed to protect the specific product.
- **Alternative Packaging (If Original is Unavailable):** If the original box is missing or damaged, Cisco cannot provide replacement packaging. You must use a sturdy box of suitable size and in good condition that can adequately protect the item during transport.
- **Individual Bagging:** All products, especially smaller components, **must be bagged individually** to prevent scratching, static discharge, and parts from becoming loose within the box.
- **Static Sensitive Items (Boards/Cards):** Items susceptible to static discharge (e.g., circuit boards, cards, modules) **must be placed in static shielding packaging (e.g., anti-static bags)**. Additionally, these items must be properly surrounded with bubble wrap or packaging foam to restrict movement and absorb shock during transport. *Failure to properly protect static-sensitive items may result in damage rendering the item unrecoverable.*



- **Secure Sealing:** Ensure the shipping box is securely sealed using durable, strong packaging tape across all seams and openings.

3. Critical for Service Replacements: Return Only What Was Provided

This section is vital to prevent mis-shipments and ensure accurate processing.

- **Return ONLY the Replaced Components:** For service replacements, it is **imperative to return only the specific components for which replacements have been provided**. Do not include additional parts, accessories, or unrelated items.
- **Remove Internal (Child) Components:** If a replacement was provided for an internal component (e.g., a line card, power supply, or fan module) that was part of a larger "parent" product (e.g., a chassis), the internal component **must be removed and packaged separately** from the parent product.
- **Transfer Accessories:** Accessories, power supplies, fan modules, and other modular components that were **not** part of the RMA replacement should be transferred to the replacement device and **not included** with the return item.
- **Cisco is Not Responsible for Excess Items:** **Cisco is not responsible for any excess items, incorrect serial numbers, or unrelated parts returned in error**. Once an item is received at the depot, it cannot be identified, retrieved, or returned to the customer. **Customers must ensure the serial numbers and quantities of parts returned precisely match the RMA.**

4. Guidelines for Large Items

- **Secure Palletization:** For large units, the item **must be securely boxed or bubble-wrapped, covered, and then securely strapped to a pallet**.
- **Shrink-wrap alone is Insufficient:** Shrink-wrapping alone is **not sufficient** for securing large items to a pallet, as it does not provide adequate protection against impact or shifting during transit.
- **Shipping Containers:** Large items may also be contained in sealed industry-standard "D" or "E" type shipping containers.
- **No Overhang or Stacking:** Products must **not overhang the pallet by more than 2cm (.78in)**. Pallets must **not be stacked** on top of each other.

5. Required Documentation & Labeling: Preventing Delays

Accurate documentation and clear labeling are essential to avoid import delays and ensure your return reaches the correct destination.

- **External Documentation (for Customs):** For international shipments, ensure all necessary paperwork, such as commercial invoices, pro-forma invoices, and packing slips, are **provided with the shipment**. Missing or incorrect customs documentation can lead to significant import delays, customs hold-ups, and potential storage fees.
- **Internal Documentation & Labeling (on Every Box):**
 - **Shipping Label:** Ensure each box has a clear shipping label with both the origin and the final shipping destination clearly indicated.
 - **RMA Information:** The **RMA Number, Country of Origin, and Quote Number (for trade-ins)** must be clearly listed on **every single box** being returned.
 - **POWR Tool Labels:** If you are using the Cisco POWR tool to request a pickup, you **must apply the POWR-generated label to every box**. These labels contain critical routing information.
- **Consequences of Mislabeled/Unlabeled Items:** Mislabeled, unlabeled, or improperly addressed RMAs will significantly delay the receiving, processing, and crediting of your return. **This is a primary cause of shipments being misdirected or considered "lost."**

6. Documentation Retention: Your Proof of Shipment

- **Retain All Shipping Documentation:** You **must retain all copies of the shipping documentation** used to return items for a minimum of **1 year**. This includes, but is not limited to, carrier receipts, tracking numbers, proof of delivery, and any photographic evidence of the packaged item and labels.
- **Importance for Disputes:** This documentation is your only reliable proof of shipment and is absolutely critical for resolving any disputes regarding missing shipments or uncredited returns. Without this documentation, Cisco's ability to assist with investigations into lost or unreceived items is severely limited.

7. Batteries & Chemical Preparations: Hazardous Material Compliance

- **No Returns for Batteries/Chemicals:** Cisco does not accept RMA returns of used, spent, or defective batteries or opened chemical preparations. This policy is in place due to hazardous material regulations and environmental compliance.
- **Battery Removal:** For products that have removable batteries, the battery **must be removed from the battery compartment prior to returning the RMA product.**
- **Local Disposal:** The removed battery (or any other chemical preparation) must be disposed of according to the hazardous waste handling regulations in your local area. Please check your local waste handling regulations for proper and safe disposal.
- **For questions or more information contact** Cisco at environment@cisco.com. Please have the original sales order number and RMA number when you contact us.

Examples below:



Example - UN number, i.e. UN 3090, UN 3091, UN 3480 and/or UN 3481, can change depending on the type of battery, the shipping configuration etc.



RMA Packaging Guidelines: Ensuring Proper Returns – November 2025

Please ensure you meet the packaging requirements. Carrier may refuse to collect the shipment if the packaging requirements as outlined in this document are not met.

CORRECT



INCORRECT



By adhering to these comprehensive guidelines, you help us ensure a smooth and efficient return process, minimizing potential issues and maximizing the accuracy of your RMA.