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Dragon Logistics are an International Freight Forwarder & Logistics Brokerage based in Melbourne, Victoria offering the full suite of import and export services, including International Freight Forwarding, Project Cargo, Customs Clearance, Self Assessed Clearance (SAC) and Personal Effect shipments. Bringing two decades of refined experience, we have built our success on high/direct levels of communication and in-depth consultation on every shipment

## TIP 1. GET INFORMED – GET ONLINE

Sign up for an online account with any shipping line that can offer you online rates. It is free, you'll have 24/7 access to global rates, schedules...and can even reserve space on vessels for your cargo. Also you'll have your finger on the pulse in terms of where current rates are.

## TIP 2. PLAN AHEAD

Equipment, as well as space on vessels, can be hard to come by. Negotiate longer validity dates with your forwarder or shipping line. Placing bookings as early as possible is important.

"Spot Bookings" are also offered by most carriers and although they do offer immediate confirmation of space when booking - such bookings do attract fees if you try to make changes or cancel.

## TIP 3. KNOW YOUR INCOTERMS

These terms of trade will dictate which party is responsible for what on each shipment. If you are new to learning Incoterms - don't try and learn them all at once – focus on a few key ones (EXW, FOB, CFR, CIF, DAP) to begin with. Knowing some of the more common ones is key.



## TIP 4. KNOW YOUR DESTINATION DOCUMENTATION REQUIREMENTS

If you are dealing in agricultural goods – ensure you know your way around MICOR

<https://micor.agriculture.gov.au/Pages/default.aspx>

All commodities, besides meat, can be accessed without a login. Some countries can be very strict with their documentation requirements. Ensure that all parties are clear of their responsibilities in advance of shipping the goods.

## TIP 5. PACKAGING

It's important to think about how the goods will be received by the consignee. If in a shared container, is the packaging strong enough to support other cargo being loaded on top? If not, and your cargo is fragile - you may want to elect to pay a bit more for "dead space" above your cargo.

If using timber packaging, also check if treated (ISPM 15) timber is required based on your destination.

## TIP 6. TRANSIT INSURANCE

This will depend on incoterms but insurance should always be discussed between parties - regardless of the terms of trade being used. If you are offering CIP or CIF terms - then getting insurance on each shipment is not an option, it is compulsory.

## TIP 7. COMPARE SHIPPING OPTIONS

Be flexible in your approach to service providers. Some smaller shipments may be better served using a door to door



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courier such as Fedex or DHL. If you are offering containerised options to your clients – what is the vessel routing like? If the routing is not direct, always remember to add the possibility of trans-shipment delay into the realistic schedule you are offering to relevant parties.

## TIP 8. CHECK VALIDITY DATES

Ensure you have quoted your client the same (freight) validity that you are also being offered by service providers. All bookings are subject to carrier acceptance, as well as next available space on offer. Some cargo (such as Dangerous Goods) will take longer to seek rates as well as to gain booking acceptance.

## TIP 9. CONFIRM THE DETAIL

Don't wait until shipment is arriving at the destination to send all documents needed for clearance. Do it early in the piece. Bill of Lading/AWB, Commercial Invoice, Packing List – these should all be sent through well in advance. Specific commodities and countries may need additional documentation such as Phytosanitary Certificates or Certificates of Origin being required.

## TIP 10. TIMING

Be aware of the time (and processes involved) to “telex release” a shipment – or to dispatch some original documents to destination via courier. This may often mean you have to push your customer for payment several days before a shipment is due to arrive. Understanding timing will often save in additional costs.

