

Avatar Professional Moving Services

How To Pack Mirrors, Picture or Glass Tops Like A Pro

Packing a mirror, painting, framed picture, or tabletop made of glass or marble is often done using a "mirror carton."

We prefer the four-piece carton (shown here) over the two-piece "telescoping" mirror carton. We also use "mirror rails," which are cardboard inserts that strengthen the carton and secure the contents. Assembling both is shown here.



4 rails & 4 mirror carton sections

However, before using a mirror carton, ask yourself:

"Will this item (e.g., small picture or table top) fit in a Dish Pack carton?" Flat items that 18" or less wide fit well in Dish Packs. For larger flat items, mirror cartons work better.

Mirror cartons come in a standard size (shown here) that accommodates most mirrors and pictures; and a large size for mirrors or pictures that are larger than 30 x 40 inches.

Very heavy marble, glass pieces, or valuable works of art should be crated in wood.

Paper padding items put in mirror cartons...Packing pictures, mirrors, and similar items usually involves first wrapping the item in paper.

Here a full size paper pad is used to wrap the picture.

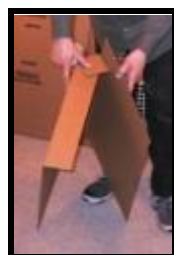


Nearly everything that is pad wrapped is positioned and wrapped this way.

Next, the four sections to the mirror carton are assembled as shown below.



Fold one cut and creased flap in.



Fold the small end flap next.



Then fold the last flap over.



Tape the end of each section with two strips of tape

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Next, two mirror sections are fitted together so they are longer than the item being packed. The mirror rails will be inserted into these.

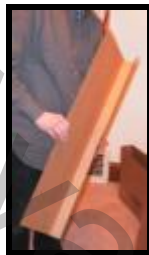


If mirror rails are not used, the bottom and ends of the assembled sections should be filled with two inches of crumpled packing paper.

Mirror Rails are nice, but not essential. We like to use them if they're available.



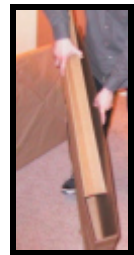
The mirror rail should be as long as the item.



The rail is folded into a long "box" shape.



Then, the center crease is folded in.



This is inserted into the carton.



The side rail here must be shorter.



The rail can be shortened by breaking it.



Rails can also be bent (or curve - below)



Now it's the right height!

Finally, Packing the Picture...



Once the bottom section is assembled, with the three mirror rails (or packing paper)...



...the item is inserted and the ends of the sections are pushed together, being sure that the item is centered and secure.

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Here the box is turned on end and the sections pushed snugly together.



A mirror rail (or crumpled packing paper) is also put in the top section of the mirror carton.



The top and bottom are then fit together with the middle seams facing the same direction.



Here the top sections are put over the bottom sections and are pushed snugly together...

The box is then pressed together in both directions so the mirror rails or packing paper secure the item.



The final mirror carton should be square and not bulging on the sides or ends. The carton can then be taped.



I tape across both center seams by going around the carton about three times...



...in each direction. Mirror cartons are loaded on edge. Taping these seams keeps them from getting caught and torn.

The final mirror carton should be correctly labeled and possibly marked with arrows to help in loading.



The mirror carton to the right shows "scroll work" marked. Note: crumpled packing paper was used to protect this carved top inside the carton.



Putting more than one picture in a mirror carton?

Yes, it can be done and we've done it. However, the combined thickness of the two items (e.g., pictures, glass table tops, glass shelves) with padding must not be more than 2½ inches. And the items must be packed so there is no chance of sliding or rubbing. Consideration must be taken of where the metal clips and hangers are, so these don't cause damage. Totally paper padding the items being packed is important. Items must be

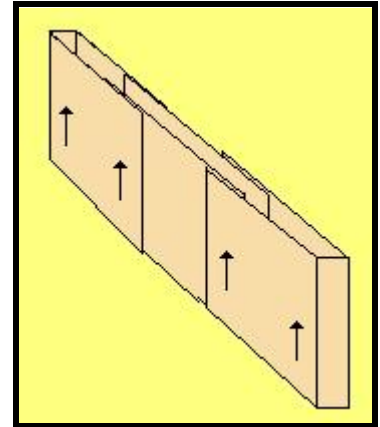
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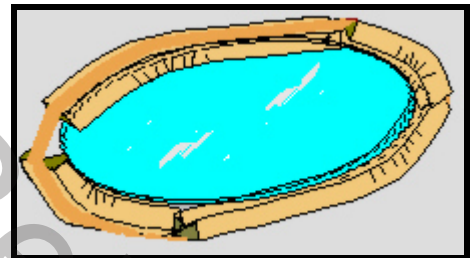
either the same size or nested. Take care not to put too much weight in a mirror carton. Very heavy or valuable items should be crated in wood.

Extended mirror cartons...

Can be used for long narrow glass shelves, such as those from a china hutch. They are packed basically the same as mirrors above. The small mirror carton can be extended and more than one whole mirror rail can be used on the longer sides. We often use just three sections (as shown), provided the open top can be closed over the top mirror rail (or packing). It is usually necessary to tape the top mirror rail to keep it from unfolding. Cut the carton corners, then fold in the ends and run a length of tape from one end to the other. Then close the longer sides, making the outside folded edges as square and straight as possible.



Curved glass (e.g., oval or round table tops) can also be packed in mirror cartons. It's best to paper pad the piece first. Then, if mirror rails are used, prepare the piece as shown to the right. Bend the rails toward the groove (be careful, they will pinch!); then wrap around the piece and secure with tape. This can be packed in a mirror carton, with crumpled packing paper as filler in the corners.



Curved glass, wrapped in mirror rails. We forgot the paper pad!

A few final words about mirror cartons...

Mirror cartons can be used for extra protection on glass doors built into some furniture; large screen and projection television screens; and tile inlay or mosaic table tops. Remember, mirror carton sections are only one walled thickness and so should be used along with proper padding when loading these items in the moving van.