

OUTDOOR & GARDEN

PRODUCT SOURCING

DC INBOUND CHECKLIST

HOME FURNITURE CHAINS & MASS MERCHANTS

The DC Inbound Checklist

Six gates to run before an outdoor furniture shipment reaches a retail distribution centre - the same checks OGPSGroup applies on every chain program.

2M+

UNITS A YEAR

98%

ON-TIME FCL

60+

VETTED FACTORIES

THE SIX GATES

- | | | | |
|-----------|------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| 01 | Read the routing guide | 02 | Lock the carton |
| 03 | Label and barcode | 04 | Build the pallet |
| 05 | Prove the transit | 06 | Ship the file |

Send us your routing guide. We will map the pack.

OGPSGroup · outdoor furniture, grills & seasonal product sourcing

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The six gates at a glance

A DC rejects a document, not a product.

Each gate below is a checkpoint in the vendor guide. Run them in order: a label or pallet problem discovered at the dock cannot be fixed by a better sample. The pages that follow give you the items to confirm at each gate.

Gate	What it decides	The cost of skipping it
01 Routing guide	Which rules the shipment must satisfy.	Rework and routing chargebacks.
02 Carton	Whether the unit can be sorted and stacked.	Mixed-carton and compression claims.
03 Label	Whether the pallet scans at intake.	Rejected pallets and relabelling.
04 Pallet	Whether the build matches the DC spec.	Per-pallet penalties and refused freight.
05 Transit test	Whether the pack survives the journey.	Damage claims and return freight.
06 File	Whether the DC can receive the PO.	Late or held shipments.

HOW TO USE THIS

Print the checklist pages and treat every unticked box as an open risk until it is closed in writing. Where a supplier cannot produce the document, that gap is the finding.

The vendor guide is a specification, not an appendix to the order.

- ☐ Current routing guide downloaded, with its version and effective date recorded.
- ☐ Carton and pallet specification copied into the product spec sheet line by line.
- ☐ Appointment, ASN and EDI requirements confirmed with the DC before production.
- ☐ Carton, master-carton and pallet label placement agreed with artwork.
- ☐ Delivery windows, cut-off times and late-shipment rules written into the calendar.
- ☐ Chargeback schedule read, so the cost of each failure is known before it happens.
- ☐ A named compliance contact on both sides, with an escalation route.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

Most chargebacks are not caused by a bad product. They are caused by a supplier who never read the guide and a buyer who assumed someone else had. The guide has to be mapped before the quote, because after the quote it is a cost.

Red flags: no version date, verbal exceptions, carrier guide never shared, rules only in an email thread.

One SKU per carton is a packing-line rule, not a note on a drawing.

- ☐ One SKU per carton; mixed cartons explicitly banned unless the guide allows them.
- ☐ Carton dimensions, gross weight and stack count fixed per SKU.
- ☐ Compression strength confirmed against the real stack height in the DC.
- ☐ Corner and edge protection specified inside the pack, not just outside the pallet.
- ☐ Short-carton rule agreed: how a partial carton is labelled and counted.
- ☐ Carton closure method checked against the guide (no banned staples or metal strapping).
- ☐ Hardware bagged by assembly step and packed in the carton it belongs to.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

A carton is the unit the DC actually handles. If two SKUs share one carton, every scan, count and allocation downstream is wrong - and the repack is charged to the supplier.

Red flags: mixed cartons "to fill the box", cartons specified only by external dimensions, no stack count, loose hardware.

A rejected label stops the whole pallet, not the one carton.

- ☐ GTIN/UPC placement matches the guide: panel, height, orientation and quiet zone.
- ☐ SSCC-18 is unique per pallet and matches the ASN exactly.
- ☐ GS1-128 label printed to a verified scan grade, not a home printer.
- ☐ Pallet label applied to the required number of faces, in the required size.
- ☐ PO, item, quantity and country of origin readable without a scanner.
- ☐ No old label left under a new one; relabelling is a controlled step.
- ☐ First article scan-tested at the DC's own scanning process where possible.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

The label is the only part of the shipment the DC reads before it decides whether to accept it. A correct product behind an incorrect label is an incorrect shipment.

Red flags: labels printed at the factory without a scan test, SSCC reused, label applied over an old one, no quiet zone.

Pallet-ready is not the same as pallet-compliant.

- ☐ Footprint confirmed: 1200 x 800 mm or 1200 x 1000 mm, fixed per SKU.
- ☐ Maximum height and weight checked including the pallet itself.
- ☐ TI/HI count written on the pallet plan and matched to the ASN.
- ☐ Corner boards and edge protection fitted to the guide.
- ☐ Stretch wrap or banding method approved; banned materials excluded.
- ☐ One PO per pallet, or clear segregation where mixing is allowed.
- ☐ Load sequence planned: heavy goods at the floor, first store or bay at the door.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

A pallet that is 5 cm over height is refused at the dock even when every carton on it is perfect. The pallet is a separate specification from the product, and it fails separately.

Red flags: height measured without the pallet, no TI/HI on the plan, mixed POs unsegregated, metal strapping where banned.

Damage found at intake is a chargeback, not a warranty question.

- ☐ ISTA 3A drop and vibration test passed on the packed, ready-to-ship unit.
- ☐ Stack test run to the actual stack height used in the container and the DC.
- ☐ Test report retained and supplied with the first shipment.
- ☐ Inner protection verified after the test: no crushed corners, no broken hardware bags.
- ☐ Instruction sheet present, legible and packed where the customer will find it.
- ☐ Damage baseline recorded per shipment so a drift is visible before it becomes a claim.
- ☐ Corrective action agreed and re-tested when a pack change is made.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

Packaging is the cheapest lever on damage and the first one skipped when a delivery date moves. A tested pack is a cost; an untested pack is a variable cost with no ceiling.

Red flags: test done on an unpacked unit, report never shared, pack changed after testing, no damage baseline.

The documents travel with the goods, not after them.

- ☐ ASN content complete and validated before the carrier is booked.
- ☐ Test reports and declarations prepared per market and per SKU.
- ☐ Final label and carton-mark artwork approved and archived.
- ☐ Spec sheet, care content and imagery ready for the buying and web teams.
- ☐ Packing list and bill of lading counts agree with the pallet plan.
- ☐ One named document owner on the supplier side for the life of the programme.
- ☐ A 24-hour exception protocol agreed for any mismatch found at pickup.

WHY THIS GATE EXISTS

A shipment held for a missing document costs the same freight and the same season as a shipment that never left. The file is part of the product.

Red flags: documents chased after departure, ASN written from memory, no document owner, exceptions handled by email at the dock.

What the buyer and the DC will ask for

Name the market before you name the product.

The DC checks the carton and the paperwork; the buying team checks the listing file. Both sets of requirements belong on the specification sheet, not on the packing list.

Market	Documents and marks to confirm
United States	Prop 65 artwork; retailer labelling and carton marks; ANSI/CSA evidence for gas grills where applicable.
Canada	CSA certification for gas appliances; bilingual labelling where required.
European Union	GPSR technical file, CE where applicable, PPWR packaging data and EUDR due diligence for regulated timber.
United Kingdom	UKCA where applicable, UK safety file and fire-safety evidence for upholstered items in scope.
Retailer onboarding	GTIN and SSCC label files, carton-mark artwork, spec sheet, imagery and content pack.

ONE TRAP WORTH NAMING

A carton that passes the drop test but fails the label scan is still a rejected pallet. Test the pack and the label together, on the first article, before mass production.

OUTDOOR & GARDEN

PRODUCT SOURCING

NEXT STEP

Send us your routing guide. We will send back the pack.

Tell us the categories, the store count and the delivery window. We map the carton, label and pallet requirements into a first inbound pack, then build the samples and the production calendar around it.

Review your DC inbound pack

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