



## *CycleCanada Guide to Shipping Your Bike*

**On all of our trips, we have space in the trucks to store bike boxes for re-use at the end of the ride. We can handle soft-shell commercial cases, if they fold flat. But we don't have space for hard-shell cases.**

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**Finding a Bike Box:** Bikes are boxed when delivered new to bike shops. Talk to your friendly local bike shop folk and ask them to save a box that is suitable for your bike. Bikes come in different sizes, so you will find that bike boxes come in a range of sizes. It's best to ride your bike to the shop when you ask them to set aside a box for you. That way, they will know the size. If you don't take the bike, you should know the frame size. Measure the length of the seat tube — from the centre of the axle at the crank set to the top of the tube where the seat post fits into the frame — and give that measurement to the shop.

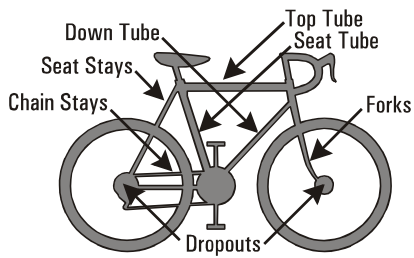
### **Important Preliminary Steps:**

- ! Don't remove anything until you take some measurements. If you will be removing the seat post or the handlebar stem, you will want to put them back so that the fit is the same. If you remove either of these, the easiest way to mark the positions is to wrap tape around the post or stem at the point where they meet the frame. Then you put them back to exactly those spots. If you lower the seat post into the frame, take a measurement from the top of the top tube to the bottom on the rails under the saddle.
- ! Assemble a collection of bags to store loose items. Zip-lock bags work well for anything that is greasy or for small bits. Bubble wrap is a good choice for anything heavy, like pedals, that might bounce around in transit. Once small items are bagged or wrapped, put them into a larger cloth bag or a padded shipping envelope.

**Frame Protectors:** There are a couple of useful techniques to protect tubes and stays on the frame. A simple one is to cut out a cardboard box at the right lengths for the various tubes. Wrap cardboard around the tubes and wrap them with tape. A more elegant technique is to use pipe insulation. It's made of polystyrene foam and available at hardware or building supply stores. There is a slit down the length of each section of pipe wrap so they can be spread open to fit over the tubes. Then tape them in place.

### **Handy Stuff:**

- ! Electrician's tape — the black stretchy stuff — usually is the best for your taping needs.
- ! When bikes are shipped, they often put plastic spacers between the dropouts. You can get axle spacers from bike shops and tape them in place for shipping the bike.
- ! Zip-ties — those plastic things that form a secure loop — are good for anything that needs to be secured to the frame.



## A Step-by-Step Primer on Preparing your Bike for Travel

The diagram at the left gives you basic terminology on the features of a bike frame. Mainly, it is the frame that you want to protect. Fixing a frame is the most problematic repair if there is damage in transit.

**Rack Trunks, Handlebar Bags, Panniers and Fenders:** Usually the bags will need to be removed, although a rack trunk may be able to sit in place. Pack bike bags in empty spaces around the bike. Be sure to position any metal attachments so they do not scratch the bike frame, or cover the metal with tape. Fenders will have to come off where a wheel is removed. Tape or zip-tie them to the wheels.

**Cyclo-Computer:** Remove the handlebar mount assembly. Tape it to the frame so the wires are protected.

**Remove the Pedals:** Note that the pedal on the right has right-hand threading and on the left it is left-hand threading. Turn counter-clockwise to remove the pedal on the right and clockwise to remove the one on the left. You may need a special pedal wrench for removal, although new pedals usually have an Allen key fitting at the end of the pedal axle. Put the pedals in bags or wrap them with bubble wrap.

**Gears and Tires:** Put the chain on the smallest ring on the front. Deflating the tires is a simple precaution to ensure that they won't pop during a flight, although most cargo holds are pressurized.

**Front Wheel:** Usually, you will have to remove the front wheel. The skewer that holds the front wheel onto the bike should be removed. Be sure that both springs are back on the skewer axle and the bolt is put back onto the end that is threaded. Put the skewer in a bag. Then place a spacer between the drop-outs on the forks (see "Handy Stuff" on reverse of this sheet). Pack the wheel in a large garbage bag.

**Rear Wheel:** It's best if the rear wheel can stay on the bike. If you must remove the rear wheel, place a spacer between the drop-outs; remove the skewer and put it in a bag; and put the wheel in a large garbage bag. If the wheel is removed, unscrew the bolt that holds the derailleur in place. Don't detach the chain or disconnect the derailleur cable. Bag or wrap the derailleur and tape or zip-tie it to the frame.

**Saddle:** Leave the saddle connected to the seat post. Remove from the frame or lower into the frame, if necessary. If the seat post is moved, be sure to tighten the binder bolt so that it stays in place.

**Handlebars:** Handlebars will at least need to be turned and they may need to be removed as well. If removed, tape or zip-tie the bars to the forks. If the bars on your bike are held in place by a faceplate with bolts, put the faceplate back on after the bars are removed or store the faceplate and bolts in a plastic bag.

**Brakes:** Removing the handlebars may also mean removing the front brakes. Generally, it is best to leave the brakes — both front and back — bolted to the frame. If they must be removed, be sure that they are bagged or wrapped and taped or zip-tied securely to forks or stays.

**Packing your Gear:** Before you close the bike box, put clothes in plastic bags and stuff those bags around the frame of the bike and the wheels. Filling empty spaces in the box serves a dual purpose. It provides extra protection for the bike and slims down the amount of stuff you need to pack elsewhere.

**Last Steps:** Be sure to pack the parts bags and the tools you will need for re-assembly. If you have used plastic zip-ties to hold things in place, include a pair of snips. Don't take any parts or tools in carry-on luggage, because it probably won't pass airport security. Tape the flaps on the box with packing tape. Put at least two labels on the box with contact information — your name and a phone number.