

Freight classification for shippers

// WHY IS FREIGHT CLASSIFICATION IMPORTANT?

Freight is classified by its dimensions, description, and other factors in order to make for a smooth shipping and billing process for customers. Industry standards prevent the process of shipping freight from becoming cumbersome and ambiguous.

// WHAT IS NMFC®?

According to the National Motor Freight Traffic Association (NMFTA), “The National Motor Freight Classification® (NMFC®) is a standard that provides a comparison of commodities moving in interstate, intrastate and foreign commerce.” As a non-profit membership organization, the NMFTA exists to provide standards for classifying freight, carrier identification codes and standard point location codes.

// HOW DO SHIPPERS USE NMFC®?

The NMFC informs the freight classification process, providing a uniform approach to negotiated rates for carriers and shippers.

An NMFC number is found by identifying the commodity in a shipment. Descriptions are first separated by a general product grouping (noun), then narrowed down to individual items that are each assigned a class.

These NMFC product descriptions can change over time, so it is important to confirm that the correct number is being used to help prevent miscalculated rates on the bill of lading.

// WHAT ARE CLASSES?

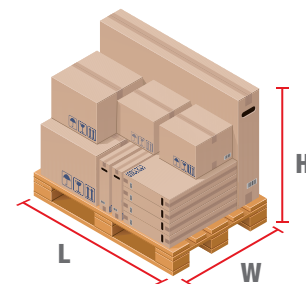
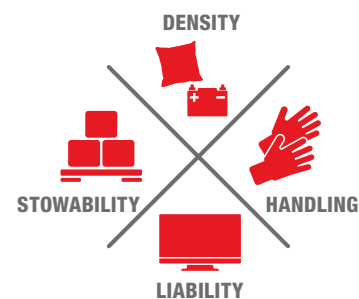
There are a total of 18 NMFC® classes, where 50 is the lowest and 500 is the highest class. The higher the class, the higher the rate for every hundred pounds you ship. Classes are based on four transportation characteristics: **density**, **handling**, **stowability** and **liability**. Collectively, these characteristics determine the appropriate rate for that class, which is then entered onto the bill of lading.

// HOW IS FREIGHT'S DENSITY MEASURED?

The overall shipment, including pallets or other packaging, is measured and weighed to determine its density. To calculate density, divide the total weight of the shipment by the total cubic feet.

Saia's [Density Calculator](#) is a fast and efficient tool to determine the density of a piece of freight. Simply plug in the dimensions (in inches) and the weight of the item, and the shipment density will be calculated for you.

Contact your local Saia account executive for more information.



Measurements include pallet/package