

How To Have A Successful Packing Party

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Packing Party is to evenly divide supplies among our checked bags. Occasionally, a checked bag doesn't make it to Manaus or arrives days later. This is why we avoid putting all of a particular supply in one bag. It also helps team members avoid paying extra checked bag fees.

The Ministry Captain needs to bring the following items to the Packing Party

1. 1 Gallon and Quart size Zip Lock Bags
2. Sharpies
3. Luggage Scale
4. Duct Tape

WHAT TO BRING

- Please bring the donated Items you've collected and an empty large suitcase or duffle bag with your name on it. You can make your bag easily identifiable by adding a ribbon or tape. Please only bring luggage that you don't mind getting dirty.
- If you have an extra suitcase we could use for another team member, please bring it. Even if you don't have supplies, please bring an empty suitcase. We might need you to take a bag for the team.
- Email your team and remind them to bring items from the Village Supplies Collection List on the website under [RESOURCES>IMPORTANT TEAM INFORMATION](#).

WHAT TO DO

Every packing party is different, and you must adjust it based on the number of supplies and suitcases available. However, here are some best practices...

- Determine the priority items and ensure they are distributed first. Medicine, VBS Supplies, and Soccer Balls are some of the top priorities.
- Condense medicines and remove boxes, waste, and other materials. This avoids bringing trash to the river and gives more room to pack.

Ensure the instruction sheet is kept with the medicine and labeled with the name and expiration date.

- Expired medicines are not allowed, so check for dates as you pack.
- Put similar small donations into Ziplock bags. For example, put several travel-size toiletries or toothbrushes into a gallon-size bag.
- Put duct tape over the lids of liquids and put them inside Ziplock bags
- Take extra caution when packing more delicate items (sunglasses) and buffer with softer items.
- Coordinate the distribution of similar items, such as medicines, into separate bags to prevent them from appearing suspicious to Customs Officials.
- If team members are absent, pack a bag for them and ask them to check it in at the airport with their names on it. **They need to look in the bag to see what was packed. They should also take a picture of the bag to see what it looks like when they get to Manaus. Finally, they need to add their name and address to the airline tag.**
- Make sure supplies for each ministry get packed.
- It's good to bring bags for giving ministry gifts (plastic grocery bags or tote bags) and gallon and sandwich-size Ziploc bags.
- Weigh the luggage to ensure it is under 50 lbs, preferably about 40 lbs, to leave room for team members to pack some of their larger personal belongings, such as sunscreen, bug repellent, and shampoo.
- Pack peanut butter, jelly, and syrup if the team desires.
- If you are bringing two checked bags, ensure that one will fit inside the other for the return trip, so you do not need to pay the return bag fee.
- You are welcome to donate your empty checked bag to the boat.

CHECKED BAG DETAILS

- Every airline has different checked-bag policies, so check your travel reservation to see if you're eligible for a free checked bag. Most COPA flights include one free checked bag, but most domestic flights charge.

- Be prepared to pay up to \$50 each way with each airline. This will be an extra cost for you. All airlines allow a maximum of 50 pounds, and all liquids over 3 ounces must be in a checked bag. We recommend checking the airline's website for information on potential baggage fees and dimensions.
- You will also have a free carry-on that must fit in the overhead compartment. We recommend a roller bag and a personal item, such as a backpack, that must fit under the seat. Use these to carry all of your personal items, except larger liquids. You do not need to bring these to the Packing Party. Pack a sweatshirt or jacket. It is freezing in the Miami airport.
- Make sure you pack your medicines in your backpack/purse. Sometimes your carry-on will be taken from you and put in the luggage area.