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Objective

The purpose of this guide is to help you scope and implement Shippo on your platform. By the end of this guide, you should be able to:

● Identify which features of Shippo you want to use
● Select the right shipping experience for your product
● Properly scope the amount of work before starting the integration
● Communicate best practices to your development team

Of course, questions come up and we’re always happy to help. Please reach out to your Account Manager or Business Development contact if you need additional support.

1. The Building Blocks of Shippo

*Shippo is a flexible multi-carrier API and web dashboard that allows platforms to:*

- **Connect multiple carrier accounts** - Shippo is a one-to-many connection where you (or your users) can connect multiple carriers through your single Shippo integration. Here’s a list of our supported carriers
- **Compare Rates** - Compare rates and delivery times across various carriers. Shippo surfaces rates across any carriers you connect, so that you and your users can choose the best shipping option
- **Create Shipping Labels** - Create labels in lightning speed across any of our supported carriers. For high volume shippers, we also offer “batch” label creation
- **Track Shipments** - Track any package across any of our supported carriers and get standardized “statuses” back
- **Validate Addresses** - Shippo helps you ensure that addresses can be delivered to, prior to creating a shipping label
- **Purchase Insurance** - Purchase either carrier supported insurance or discounted insurance from our third-party insurance provider
- **Create Shipping Manifests** - Create carrier manifest forms as-needed
- **Create Return Labels** - Create scan-based return labels for outbound shipments, to provide as seamless return experience
- **Ship Internationally** - Ship packages worldwide with all the necessary customs and declarations documentation
2. Scoping & Getting Started

Scoping & Basic Setup

Shippo has a public and flexible RESTful API along with multiple client libraries to help you get started quickly. The length of implementation time depends on the complexity of the integration.

There are three integration options to choose from and your choice will likely impact the timelines and scope of the implementation. Thanks to our flexible API, you can choose which option suits your business best. Scoping out the full customer experience from the get go (i.e. purchase, to shipping options, to choosing shipping) will help you decide on the best option.

Chart For Comparing Integration Options

Integration Options

There are three main ways to integrate with Shippo:

1. White label
2. Standalone accounts
3. Order sync

1. White Label

The white label integration allows you to build shipping as a native experience directly inside of your product to maintain your brand's look and feel. In this case, your users will have no idea that Shippo is working in the background.

With white label, all of the shipping and per-label fees are charged to a single Shippo account. With this integration option, you're responsible for reconciling shipping costs and collecting payment for shipping costs from your sellers (if you choose to do so). Shippo will bill the payment source you have on file with your Shippo account.

Since Shippo is “behind-the-scenes,” you're responsible for customer support and communication when it comes to Shippo-related questions.

Advantages:
• Seamless user experience
• Maintain your brand’s look and feel, have more control over the user experience and UI
• More control over the shipping experience (i.e. you can select specific carriers, rates, and service levels to expose to your users)
• A single Shippo account makes it simple to manage from a billing perspective

Things to be Aware of:
• You are responsible for Shippo service fees and shipping/carrier costs
• You are responsible for reconciling payments from your users
• You are responsible for handling all communication and customer interactions related to shipping as it’s not clear to users that Shippo is present
• You are responsible for addressing any shipping-related fraud occurring on your platform

Costs:
• **Per-label fees:** You are charged the per-label or monthly fee via the payment method you have setup on your Shippo account
• **Shipping/Postage fees:** If you’re using Shippo’s master USPS account, USPS shipping costs will be billed via Shippo to your master account. For all other carriers, your shipping fees will be charged to your carrier account directly.

Example of white label implementations:
• Mercari
2. Standalone Accounts

Allowing your users to access Shippo through their own Shippo account is the best option if you want to offer shipping features within your platform, but don’t want to handle the billing and customer support when it comes to shipping.

Your users will sign up for a Shippo account through a simplified registration flow. This flow will require them to create their own Shippo account and input their billing information. Once they create an account through the flow, Shippo will provide them with an API key. This API key will be used to associate a user’s shipments on your platform with their Shippo account. You will need to specify a field in your platform where the user can enter this API key.

Shippo handles your user onboarding and bills the users directly. Shippo will also automatically run fraud checks for all user accounts and shipping label requests. Finally, because the user is aware that they are a Shippo customer, we will handle Shippo-related customer support.

Advantages:

- Simple way to offer shipping on your platform with minimal overhead
- You don’t have to handle billing
- You don’t have to handle customer support when it comes to shipping
• You don’t have to handle shipping-related fraud, because Shippo is charging your users directly

Things to be Aware of:

• Customers have to go through an extra step of signing up for a Shippo account
• Your platform will have less control over shipping options (since your users can connect to carriers of their choice)

Costs:

• *Per-Label Fees:* Your users are charged the per-label or monthly fee directly from Shippo
• *Shipping Costs:* Your users are charged directly for the shipping/postage costs

**Example of light registration flow**

• [Shippo light registration](#)

3. Order Sync

Order Sync allows your customers to import orders from your platform into the Shippo web dashboard where they can fulfill their orders.

You can sync all your users’ orders to the Shippo web dashboard via our [Order endpoint](#). Order Sync is the best option when you don’t want to build your own shipping interface. Your users can use the Shippo dashboard to fulfill their orders, and all order data will sync automatically between your platform and Shippo’s web dashboard.

If you’re interested in this option, reach out to your Account Manager.

**Advantages:**

• Offer shipping as a feature on your platform in a simple way
• You don’t have to handle billing
• You don’t have to handle customer support when it comes to shipping
• You don’t have to handle shipping-related fraud, because Shippo is charging your users directly

**Things to be Aware of:**

• Customers have to go through an extra step of connecting Shippo to your platform
• Your platform will have less control over shipping options (since your users can connect to carriers of their choice)
Costs:
- *Per-Label Fees*: Your users are charged the per-label or monthly fee directly from Shippo
- *Shipping Costs*: Your users are charged directly for the shipping/postage costs

Example of an Order Sync Integration:
- *Weebly*

### 3. Carriers & Shipping

*As you’re considering your integration options and front-end experience, the next components to consider are your shipping methods and carriers.*

**Carriers**

**“Shippo-Owned Carrier Accounts” vs. your own carrier accounts**

- For select carriers, you can use Shippo-owned carrier accounts to print labels immediately. This means that you can get rates and order labels without having to create an individual account with a carrier. Shippo only offers these types of accounts for:
  - USPS — US domestic and US origin to international destinations
  - DHL Express — US origin to international destinations
  - UberRUSH — only supported in select US cities
  - Deutsche Post — Germany domestic and German origin to international destinations
- For all other carriers*, you can “connect” your carrier accounts in Shippo to compare rates, buy labels and more. You can do this through the **API** or the **Shippo web dashboard**.
- *Special note regarding UPS accounts: In order to return your UPS negotiated rates, you must go through the full-registration process.
  - Connecting your UPS account through the **Shippo web dashboard** (not the API)
  - A recent UPS invoice to reference
- If you don’t yet have carrier accounts, you must create them. Here are some links to major global carriers that we support.
  - **FedEx**
  - **UPS**
  - **DHL**
Multiple carrier accounts
● Within each carrier, you may connect multiple carrier accounts. For example, if your LA warehouse has a FedEx account and your NY warehouse has a different Fedex account, you can “connect” both your NY and LA FedEx accounts to a single Shippo account.

When to contact carriers
● If you’re leveraging a Shippo-owned carrier account (i.e. USPS), you won’t need to contact the carriers or set up your own carrier account. If you are a high volume shipper and have your own USPS NSA, we can support that as well. Reach out to Shippo support or your Account Manager if you have an NSA.
● If you have technology questions, leave that to us. We maintain and coordinate our carrier integrations and that’s why you use Shippo!
● If your carrier contact has questions about Shippo or the value we provide, we’re always happy to be a resource. You can direct those questions to your Account Manager

Carrier Pickups
● Shippo currently does not offer the option of scheduling carrier pickups via the API or web dashboard. Customers have to go to the carrier website or call their rep to schedule pickups on their own. For USPS and Fedex pickup, the customer would have to print out the shipping labels prior to pickup. Manifests can be created via the API.

Weight and dimension discrepancies if parcels are bigger/smaller
● In order to rate shop and order a label via Shippo, you have to provide us with the parcel dimensions and weight. Sometimes there are discrepancies between the size and weight of the ordered label versus the actual package that ships. Please note:
○ USPS will randomly sample packages to weigh and measure. If there is a discrepancy, they will charge back the USPS account owner. If you’re using Shippo’s USPS account, we will pass along the costs to you. USPS will not deny pickup.
○ Most other carriers (i.e. UPS, FedEx) will scan the package upon pickup. At that point, if there’s an adjustment to be made, it will be credited or debited directly from your carrier account. If the label is not used, you will not incur shipping charges.

4. Getting Rates & Ordering Labels

After you’ve connected your carrier accounts, it’s time to rate compare and order labels.

Address Validation
The first step to ordering a label is to ensure that the recipient address is deliverable. Shippo currently supports domestic address validation and will support international address validation shortly. Here’s more information about address validation. Note that for select carriers you can bypass this option.

Here are the fields that Shippo can validate using our “address” endpoint:

- Street 1
- Street No
- Street 2
- City
- State
- Zip
- Country

Of those, the following address-related fields are required to generate a label:

- Name
- Street 1
- City
- State
- Zip
- Country
Address Validation Best Practices

- Use the complete API response after validating an address. There are instances where our validation engine may correct the initial address in your request. In this scenario, we return the response as a “valid” address, so please reference the entire response to account for any corrected changes.
- When you get back a VALID address, use that “address object id” when creating the shipment object to get rates. This ensures that you’re using the “valid” address. If you happen to be storing addresses in your database, we recommend that you update the original address you’ve stored with the validated address.
- It is best to validate a user’s address as early as possible in the user experience so they don’t hit any roadblocks prior to a purchase or transaction.

UI Best Practices

Name Fields

- Simple validation on name fields will ensure successful transactions. For example, confirm that users aren’t entering emojis or special characters in this field to reduce errors.

Separate Street Fields

- Separating “Street 1” and “Street 2” fields will make it easier to validate addresses.

Numeric Zip Codes

- For regions that have numeric zip codes (i.e USA), we recommend that you use the number pad (for mobile apps) to reduce error in inputting the zip code. For others that use a combination of letters and zip (i.e. Canada), the standard keyboard will suffice.

Phone Number

- If an address is determined to be a US address, limit the amount of characters to 10. For a non-US address, allow phone numbers with up to 15 characters. A phone number is only required for international shipments and USPS Express shipments.

Getting Rates

In order to save on shipping costs, businesses will typically compare prices among various carriers to ensure they’re getting the best rates. This is also known as “rate shopping.” This is not a required step, but if you want to give your users options when it comes to prices or service levels, it’s a great feature to leverage.
If you do decide you want to rate shop before purchasing a label, you’ll have to use the “shipments endpoint.” You’ll need to include the from address, to address, parcel dimensions and weight.

The API will return various pieces of information back, namely rates, estimated delivery times, and an object ID organized by carrier and service level. The object ID is an important piece of information, because when it’s time to purchase a label (aka creating a “transaction”) you will need to specify the object ID of the rate you want to purchase.

Ordering Labels

There are two primary ways to order a shipping label:

1. Getting a “Rate ID” and purchasing labels
2. Creating a “batch” order of up to 10,000 shipments per call

1. Getting a “Rate ID” & Purchasing Labels

The first step to get a rate, would be to create a “shipment.”

A shipment consists of:

- Address From
- Address To
- Parcel:
  - Length
  - Width
  - Height
  - Distance unit — cm, in, ft, mm, m, yd
  - Weight
  - Weight Unit — g, oz, lb, kg

When you create a shipment, you will get a response with shipping rates and service levels for any carriers that are connected to your Shippo account. Each of those shipping rates has a unique “object_id.” These Object ID’s can be used to purchase a label.

2. Batch Ordering Labels

If you order a high volume of labels, you may want to use the “batches” endpoint. This allows you to create up to 10,000 labels per API call. You may find this useful if you’re a high volume shipper and/or you don’t typically rate shop (i.e. you use the same carrier or service level consistently).
The first step in creating a batch label order, is to create the “shipment” as covered above. When you get a response back, note that you will get Object ID’s for the from address, to address and parcel. Those are important because they’re required for each order within a batch.

In order to make a successful batch request, you’ll need the following:

- Label File Type (PDF, PDF_4x6, PNG, ZPL)
- Address From Object ID
- Address To Object ID
- Parcel Object ID
- Carrier Account
- Service Level Token

Refunds on Per-Label Fees

Automatic Refunds (USPS only)

- If a USPS label is unused 30 days after it is ordered, the shipping and per-label fee is automatically refunded and credited to your Shippo account

FedEx & UPS

- Outbound labels — you are charged the per-label fee upon label creation
- Return labels — you are charged the per-label fee upon scan of the label

“Manual” Refunding

- Non-automatic handling of refunding can be done using the [Refunds endpoint](#)
  - If a refund is claimed, the label is not usable
  - Refunds take 14 days to be processed
- To process a refund, you can simply post to that endpoint with the respective transaction object_id and it will begin the process

## 5. Tracking

After you generate a label, you will want to know where that shipment is.

Shippo can help you track packages whether those labels were generated on Shippo or not. Refer to our [carrier list](#) to see the carriers we support. Shippo polls carriers for tracking updates every six hours.

Every label purchased via Shippo includes free tracking. Shippo standardizes the carriers’ various tracking statuses into five key statuses that are easy to interpret:
• **UNKNOWN**: The package has not been found via the carrier's tracking system, or it has been found but not yet scanned by the carrier.
• **TRANSIT**: The package has been scanned by the carrier and is in transit.
• **DELIVERED**: The package has been successfully delivered.
• **RETURNED**: The package is en route to be returned to the sender, or has been returned successfully.
• **FAILURE**: The carrier indicated that there has been an issue with the delivery. This can happen for various reasons and depends on the carrier. This status does not indicate a technical, but a delivery issue.

**There are three main ways to track a package via Shippo:**

1. “Transactions” Endpoint — only applicable for labels purchased via Shippo
2. Webhooks (recommended)
3. “Tracks” Status Endpoint

1. **Transactions Endpoint**
   
   Please note that this can only be used for labels that are purchased via Shippo. Use the transaction ID of the Shippo label to get back a response with the tracking number, status and tracking history.

2. **Webhooks (recommended)**
   
   The best way to get tracking information is to leverage our webhooks. In this scenario, Shippo will “push” status updates via webhooks to a URL of your choice so that you do not need to constantly poll Shippo for updates. You can leverage webhooks to do things like send email updates to customers every time there is a status change on a tracking number as well.

3. **“Tracks” Status Endpoint**
   
   To use this endpoint you'll need to provide the tracking number and carrier. From this, we return address, ETA and service level information. We also return the current tracking status and previous tracking history. Again, we recommend using tracking webhooks instead so you don’t have to constantly poll Shippo for updates.
6. Testing

Before going live with Shippo, we recommend using Shippo in test mode to ensure you have a smooth rollout.

Best Practices

- Shippo offers two modes: “test” and “live.” Make sure that you are using your Shippo test token when running tests and your live token when you want to go live. Your Shippo API test tokens can be easily accessed by going to app.goshippo.com/api.
- Test labels can not be used for shipments and you are NOT charged per-label or shipping fees.
- Some carriers (FedEx for example) provide two sets of API keys: a “test key” and a “live key.” If that’s the case, ensure that you’re using the correct token based on the mode you’re using for Shippo. For these scenarios, we also recommend that you create two carrier accounts, one Fedex test account and one Fedex “active” account to reduce confusion.

7. Launch & Beyond

This is the only the beginning. We’re here to help your business succeed through shipping. If you have any questions or need help getting started, please reach out. Our team is here to support you!
Appendix A: Helpful Engineering Links

- Shippo API documentation and endpoints
- Client Libraries
- Shippo Supported Carriers
- Shippo Integration Options — determine your use case
- Shippo Help Center
- Shippo support: support@goshippo.com or contact your Account Manager
- Marketplace white paper — great tips on best practices for implementing Shippo for a marketplace use-case