

TRASH BOX

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN PURCHASING A SMALL CAN



Purchasing small containers can be stressful. From confusing specs to the first time you have to unexpectedly unload a trailer full of stacked and nested containers, there are many opportunities for frustration to arise. Let's talk about how you can eliminate stress and any potential surprises by looking at the steps of purchasing a small can, including:

1. Your Truck Style
2. Spec-ing Containers
3. Requesting Quotes
4. Placing Your Order
5. Shipping + Delivery
6. Follow Up

Your Truck + System

Small can manufacturers will need to know if you have an existing truck or if you are in the market to buy. This information is important to ensure that the proper style of small can is quoted to fit your truck. If you are in the market for a truck, the roll-off manufacturer can likely connect you with some truck dealers and upfitters to help you source the right truck for your business. When you are using small cans for your business, you are likely using one or both types of trucks, a front-end loader garbage truck or rear load garbage truck.

Front load containers are used in conjunction with front-end loader garbage trucks. These trucks are equipped with forks on the front of the truck that are used to pick up the front loader by the side fork pockets. Then, the hydraulics of the truck lift the container above the cab to be dumped into the container, or hopper.

Rear load containers are used in conjunction with rear loader garbage trucks. These trucks are equipped with grasping hooks mounted at the rear opening of the truck that hook onto the trunnion bars. When locked in place and paired with a tip bar and/or chain on the pickup hooks, the hydraulic operation of the truck allows the container to be easily lifted and emptied.

Spec-ing Containers

The more you know about what you want and how you will use it, the more accurate your quote will be. To help the small can manufacturer understand what types of containers you need, there are several things to consider:

Front Load:

1. *What size container are you looking for?*

Front load small containers are manufactured in sizes ranging from 2 to 10 yards.

2. *Are you looking for a slant or flat top design?*

You can choose between a slant or flat top design in whatever size you choose.

3. *Will you want side doors?*

Containers that are 6 to 10 yards also have the option to feature side doors for easier access when loading garbage.

4. *Do you need casters?*

Casters are an available option for 2-4 yard sizes. They allow for greater maneuverability.

5. *Do you need something other than standard plastic lids?*

Standard plastic lids typically do just fine. However, if you live in an area with severe weather or the risk of animals getting into the container, it may be best to request lid mount locks, or even a steel style lid.





Rear Load:

1. What size container are you looking for?

Rear load small cans are manufactured in sizes ranging from 2 to 8 yards.

2. Do you need casters?

Casters are an available option for 2-4 yard sizes. They allow for greater maneuverability.

Requesting Quotes

Whether it is your first time purchasing a container or you've been in the industry for a while, it is always a good idea to contact several container manufacturers to compare pricing, specs, lead time and service. If you have purchased from a manufacturer previously, the quote process will be

pretty smooth. More often than not, the purchase is for the same order as before and all of that information has been filed. If you are shopping around or getting your first ever quote, the process will take a little longer as they will all be asking the same questions that you may have answered several times before. It is important to be patient during this time as the more information they get on the first call, the more accurate your quote will be without the need to make additional edits.

Your decision may come quickly or may take a couple of weeks. When you receive more than one quote, be sure you are comparing apples to apples with specifications. Manufacturers may have different standard product builds. This happens less frequently in small cans as compared to roll-off containers, but here are some key differences to look for:

1. Pick-Up/Lifting Points

As the most important spec of the small can, you want to ensure that the pick-up/lifting points are strong enough to withstand everyday use. On a front load container, the fork pockets are often formed from 7GA steel. On a rear load container, the lifting point, or trunnion bar, is often a 1 1/2" formed bar, however, could be hot or cold formed based on size for a stronger construction.

2. Side & Floor Sheets

Do you see differences in the thickness of the floor sheet or side sheets on your quotes? These could be simple differences in unit of measurement such as 3/16" vs 7ga, or they could be actual differences in thickness such as 10GA vs 12 GA. Make sure you understand the differences both in function and cost.

3. Prime + Paint Options

Does your quote include primer or is it only upon request? Are you getting a water-based topcoat or an alkyd enamel? Is it a complete paint on the container or just an external coat? If you need a specialty paint color, lead times may be extended.

4. Lead Time

Manufacturers have standard lead times based on the current orders in-house but may be able to accommodate a faster turnaround time when requested. Some may even have small cans in stock and ready to ship when you need them. If you have selected any specialty specs or a custom paint color, lead times may be longer than anticipated.



Placing Your Order

Once you decide on the manufacturer, it is time to inform them that you are ready to move forward. Some companies may require you to sign a quote before they turn it into a sales order. The sales order will include several items – the product description, quantity, price, estimated completed date, estimated ship date, other shipping information, and terms and conditions. Be sure to review all of this information prior to signing to make sure nothing was missed.

Once the sales order is signed, the order will be placed in the production schedule. You should receive updates on your container throughout the process, letting you know if your container is ahead of schedule or if there are any questions along the way that could cause any delay. Once the container is painted, it will cure and be stored in the yard. The manufacturer will then have the sales representative or shipping coordinator contact you to let you know that the container is complete and awaiting pickup or shipment.

The Shipping + Delivery

An important question that is commonly forgotten is shipping. There can be several options for the delivery of your containers based upon your location, order details and capability. More often than not, delivery will be by a tractor trailer, so it is important to make sure the delivery location can accommodate a truck of this size.

The most common delivery options are:

1. Delivery by manufacturer-owned truck

With this option, the manufacturer will utilize their own truck(s) and employee(s) to deliver your order.

2. Delivery by Common Carrier, Manufacturer Arranged

With this option, a third-party will be contracted by the manufacturer to deliver your order. The manufacturer will provide you with the contact information of the carrier. The carrier will be in contact with you regarding their estimated delivery day/time.

3. Delivery by Common Carrier, Customer Arranged

With this option, you contract with a third party to pick up your order at the manufacturer's location and deliver it to you. You will need to provide the carrier and manufacturer with proper contact information so that they can arrange the pickup at the manufacturer's location.

4. Customer Pickup

With this option, a customer will travel to the manufacturer's location to pick up their order in person. The customer will arrange the pickup day/time based on the manufacturer's hours of operation.

Another factor to consider with shipping is the trailer configuration. It is common practice with small cans to consolidate freight by stacking them so more units can be placed on a single trailer. This is a great way to reduce shipping expenses. However, when containers are stacked, it is important to understand the challenges and responsibilities that may arise. The containers will have a greater risk of damage and scratches and will be more time consuming to unload. When you agree to have your units stacked, most manufacturers will have you sign a disclaimer stating that you understand that minor cosmetic damage can occur during the loading/unloading process. You can choose to have your order delivered without stacking but be aware that if a large quantity of containers is purchased, more deliveries will be required which will significantly increase your cost. When it comes to unloading the small cans, you are responsible for having proper equipment on-site at time of delivery. Commonly used unloading equipment include forklifts, cranes, and heavy capacity chains.

Follow Up

A couple of days after your container has arrived at your facility, the manufacturer may contact you again to ask if the container has met your expectations. This is where you can tell them your feedback. If you are pleased, they may also ask you to provide a testimonial about your experience to use on the website, social media, and other future marketing materials.

Are You Ready?

Now that you know everything to prepare for when ordering your small can, it is time to put it to the test. Gather all of the information that the manufacturer will ask prior to making the call. You'll be sure to surprise them. Be patient if you are asking for a specialty specification as it may take some time to draw up. Review all of the information laid out on the quote and sales order before approving and signing to ensure both you and the manufacturer are on the same page. Wait for the call letting you know your container is completed and ready to get to work. Watch videos on how to safely unload the trailer once it arrives at your facility. Expect a follow up call to ensure that everything went smoothly. Give some manufacturers a call today and get started with a quote or two and start fresh with some new containers.