



TECH SHEET

Technical Tips To Help You And Your Customers

CODES AND STANDARDS

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Understanding the types of pallets and skids

In the USA there are over 450 million new pallets produced each year. It is estimated roughly 1.9 billion pallets and skids are in use at any given time. This Tech Sheet discusses the types, sizes and where they are commonly used.

The ten most common pallet sizes, along with the typical industries that use these sizes, are as follows:

Pallet Size (inches)	Production Rank	Typical industry usage
48 x 40	1	Grocery (GMA pallet size)
42 x 42	2	Telecommunications and Paint
48 x 48	3	Drums
40 x 48	4	Dept. of Defense, Cement
48 x 42	5	Chemical and Beverage
40 x 40	6	Dairy
48 x 45	7	Automotive
44 x 44	8	Drums and chemical
36 x 36	9	Beverage
48 x 36	10	Beverage, Shingles, Packaged paper and Sheet stock

Notes

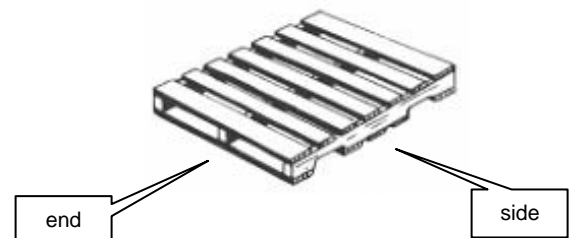
This list totals about 60% of USA annual production. The 1st pallet (48 x 40) is most common and represents about 30% of the pallets produced each year. The 10th most common size (48 x 36) represents less than 2% of the market. The remaining 40% of the market includes hundreds of sizes typically tailored to specific customer needs.

The size of a pallet is specified by its stringer length, followed by its deckboard width.

There are two main types of pallet designs: block and stringer. Stringer type pallets are more common. Stringer pallets only allow pallet jacks or fork lifts to enter on the ends; they are called 2-way. If the stringers are notched (like a GMA pallet) a fork lift (not a pallet jack) can enter on the sides; this is a partial 4-way. The principle advantage of the block pallet is pallet jacks and fork lifts can enter from any side; this is a true 4-way pallet.

Skids are open bottom pallets. They are generally less expensive to manufacture and are typically not as durable as a pallet because the stringer is unsupported on the bottom and is more susceptible to damage. Skids are common in certain industries like printing and graphics.

Stringer pallet – This is a GMA (Grocery Manufacturers Assoc.) pallet. It is a, “partial” 4-way pallet. Fork trucks can enter on four sides and pallet jacks can only enter on two ends. A GMA pallet is 48” x 40” by design and has notched stringers.



Stringer pallet (typical). This is a 2-way pallet. Fork trucks and pallet jacks can only enter from either end. It very common and is made in a variety of sizes. It is a good general duty pallet.



This stringer pallet comes in single and double wing configurations. It is a 2-way pallet. It is another variation of a stringer pallet. Note the deck boards extend out beyond the stringers.



Block style pallet. This is a true 4-way pallet. Fork trucks or pallet jacks can enter from any of the four sides. It has an open bottom (like a skid) on the ends. Block style pallets are also nestable which saves considerable space when stacking empty pallets. EURO pallets (Europe) are block style pallets by design.



Skid. Also referred to as a Single Faced Pallet. It has an open bottom design. Skids are limited to 2-way entry for fork lifts and pallet jacks.



This is typical of a special designed pallet. This may use plywood or some other laminated sheet for the top or even the bottom deckboard. They come in a variety of sizes to suit the application. They are typically 2-way stringer pallets.



Plastic pallet – Rackable. Also referred to as stackable. These are 4-way pallets where a fork truck or a standard pallet jack can enter from any of the four sides. Rackable plastic pallets can provide unsupported rack capacities up to 3,000 lbs. They are popular where hygiene is a priority and they are dimensional consistent for use in automated systems. They have a high service life 250 trips vs. wood at 3 – 5 trips. They are 100% recyclable.



Plastic pallet – Nestable. These are less expensive than rackable plastic pallets. These are 4-way pallets allowing a fork truck or a pallet jack to enter from any of the four sides. Nestable pallets are open bottom pallets (like a skid). They are nestable at ratios up to 4.0:1. They are popular where hygiene is important, they are available in FDA approved and fire retardant materials and they are 100% recyclable.

