



## Outbound Shipping: What Happens After the Show Floor Closes?

The show is over. Attendees have gone home. Booths are coming down. Everyone is ready to get out of the hall.

But before your team heads to the airport, there is one final phase of the event that can make or break the overall experience: outbound shipping.

Move out is one of the busiest and most fast-paced parts of any trade show. Freight is moving in every direction, carriers are checking in, labor crews are working against tight deadlines, and small mistakes can quickly turn into expensive problems.

That is why having a clear outbound shipping plan is just as important as your pre-show planning.

At SourceOne Events, we help exhibitors and organizers navigate moving out smoothly because we believe every part of the event matters, from move-in to move-out. *Trade Up to a Better Experience.*

### Outbound Shipping Starts Before the Event Ends

One of the biggest misconceptions in the trade show industry is that outbound shipping is something you figure out once the booth is packed.

In reality, the most successful move-outs are planned well before the show floor closes.

Your onsite team should already know:

- Where the freight is going
- Which carrier is handling the shipment
- How the shipment is being billed
- How many pieces are leaving the booth
- What paperwork is required onsite

When this information is unclear, delays happen quickly.



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### What Is a Material Handling Agreement?

Almost every general service contractor requires a Material Handling Agreement, commonly called an MHA, for outbound freight.

This document is critical because it tells the contractor:

- Where your shipment is going
- Who is picking it up
- How many pieces are leaving the booth
- Who is responsible for billing

If your freight is being handled by the general contractor in any way, whether it is being moved to the dock, delivered to a package room, or loaded onto a carrier, the MHA is required.

The only time an MHA is typically not needed is when materials are personally hand carried out of the building.

### Know Your Carrier Before Move Out Begins

One of the most common causes of outbound confusion is uncertainty around the carrier.

Before the event ends, your team should know whether:

- An outside LTL carrier is picking up the freight
- UPS or FedEx labels have already been prepared
- The general contractor is arranging outbound shipping
- Company-owned transportation is handling the move

Each option impacts how the paperwork is completed and how the shipment is processed onsite.

If you are using your own carrier or prepaid labels, transportation charges are typically billed directly to your company. If you are using the show carrier arranged through the contractor, the contractor is billed first and then invoices your company afterward.

Because multiple freight providers are involved during move-out, final billing can sometimes take several weeks to process.



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### Piece Counts Matter More Than You Think

Move-out environments change quickly.

Boxes get consolidated. Empty containers return to booths. Freight shifts during dismantle. Materials are sometimes mistaken for trash. That is why accurate piece counts are incredibly important.

If the contractor is expecting three pieces but only finds two, crews will spend time searching for missing freight. If extra pieces appear that were not listed, additional follow-up becomes necessary before the shipment can leave the building.

The best practice is to complete and submit the MHA only after everything is fully packed and staged.

Submitting paperwork too early often creates unnecessary confusion once the final piece count changes.

### Don't Forget the Final Step

It sounds simple, but incomplete paperwork is one of the biggest causes of outbound delays.

#### Before leaving the service desk:

- Verify all addresses
- Confirm carrier information
- Double-check piece counts
- Review billing details
- Make sure all required signatures are completed

A few extra minutes on-site can prevent major headaches after the event.

### A Smooth Move Out Is Part of a Successful Event

The attendee experience may end when the show floor closes, but operationally, the event is not over until the freight safely gets home. **Strong outbound planning helps reduce stress, avoid delays, minimize extra charges, and keep your team focused on what matters most, preparing for the next event.**

At SourceOne Events, we know the smallest details often have the biggest impact. That is why we approach move out with the same level of attention and care as every other phase of the show. Because a better experience should not end when the event closes.

Trade Up To A Better Experience