

# Storage Container Purchasing Guide



# Introduction to the Storage Container Buying Process

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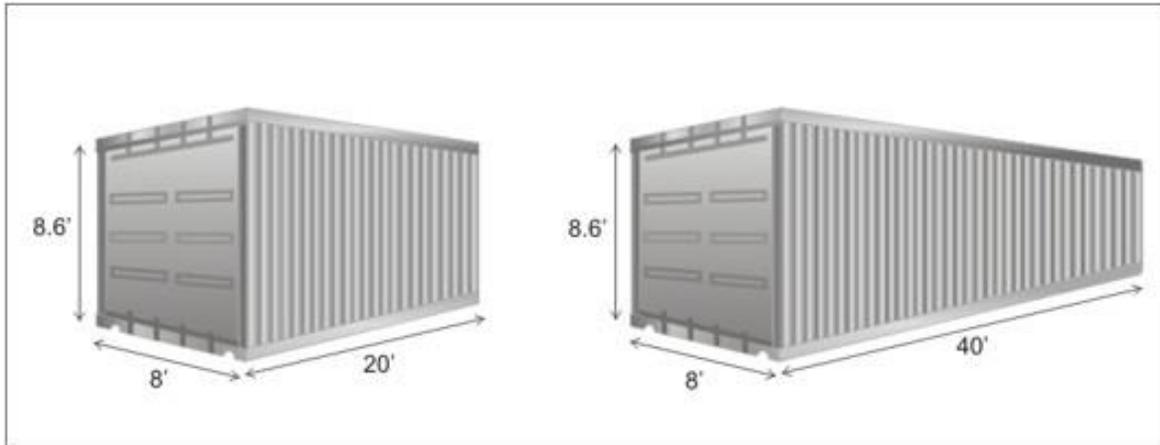
## Introduction

If you are in need of an inexpensive storage solution, a storage container could be what you're looking for. Aside from storage and transport usage, storage containers have a wide variety of applications. A storage container is a stackable metal container initially used for the transportation of goods via sea or land. Storage containers are very durable. They are built to carry heavy weights and able to withstand extreme climate conditions and transportation hazards such as salt and moisture.

Today, storage containers are typically used in construction and industrial settings for storing large machinery and protecting equipment from theft and damage. Storage containers are, however, helpful for almost any business where it is necessary to store excess inventory. Before purchasing a storage container, you should consider the features available as well as size. Both these considerations will affect the cost of your storage container.

## Sizing

Your first step will be to estimate the size of the storage container that will meet your needs. The two most common container sizes are twenty-foot containers and forty-foot containers. Both sizes are 8 feet wide, and 8 feet 6 inches (see Figure 1) or 9 feet 6 inches high. The twenty-foot container is the most common.



## Cost

Prices of used storage containers start around \$1,000. However, almost new and modified ones can cost anywhere from \$5,000 to \$8,000. The costs depends on the following:

- Size
- Material
- Condition

## Space

When looking into buying a storage container, it is important to make sure you have adequate space for one. The larger the space, the easier delivery and set up will be. Depending on the supplier, the delivery options may vary. Generally, suppliers offer free transportation or delivery for a nominal fee. Some suppliers do expect you to make your own transportation arrangements, however, so be sure to review this with them.

## Trends

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### Used containers

If you are looking for an inexpensive storage solution for construction and industry needs, a used storage container is a favorable alternative. Storage containers that are offered for resale will range in appearance from almost new to well-worn containers. The versatility of storage containers stems from the fact that they are sturdy and well built. Thus, their usefulness does not end when they come out of service (usually after years of international shipping). They are readily available in the market and at affordable prices.



When purchasing storage containers for any kind of construction and industrial use, size and condition are important considerations. Buying a used container can save you up to 75% of the total price for any given type of container. Used containers often come from the shipping industry after they are no longer used for long-distance transportation of goods. You can choose to buy newer, one-trip storage containers, or you could go with used containers at lower prices.

For both used and new storage containers, it's essential that you have it inspected before purchase. You can hire someone to do this or consult your supplier. But, it is advisable to do it yourself if at all possible. By doing so, you can get the best possible add-on features within your available budget. It's important to consider the fact that suppliers often have biased opinions which may not match your needs and preferences. If you contact professionals for transport, they might have experience with containers and be willing to help you evaluate the container. Educate yourself about what a container in good condition should look like. Have a clear picture of what you want and need.

When inspecting a container, look for any signs that could mean this container would not fill your intended purpose. These signs may include:

- Holes
- Dents
- Rust
- Odors
- Malfunctioning doors

Having a clear understanding of what container types are offered and at what prices will help you secure a good deal.

## Weatherproofing and insulation

If the purpose you have in mind for your storage container means that it has to be able to withstand various weather conditions, you need to pay close attention to the type of material that was used to make it.

- Is the container protected from rust?
- Were high quality bolts used in the container's construction?

If a container is weatherproof, that information should be available. However, it's better safe than sorry to check to be sure. A weatherproof container is built to withstand various climate conditions while protecting the goods inside. Good weatherproofing means having no problem with moisture and safe for storing equipment, furniture, and personal items.

Some containers such as ones used to preserve products sensitive to temperature changes, (like food, chemicals, and pharmaceutical products) are insulated. If you are aiming to use your container for similar tasks, you will need to look into units that can guarantee good insulation. This will preserve your temperature-sensitive goods.

## Materials

Storage container materials vary depending on the purpose the container serves. For construction and industrial uses, containers must be built from steel, stainless steel, corrugated steel, or weatherproof material as these materials ensure durability.

When looking at available containers, think about what purpose you need the container to fill and explore the options given while balancing price and quality. Requirements like weatherproof containers, insulated containers, and containers that fill other purposes all affect the cost.

## Types/Designs

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Storage containers serve a wide variety of purposes. Your intended use for the container will affect your container's design and type choice.

### Shelving

One popular design choice is shelving. Depending on the size of your container and how many shelves/brackets/racks you want, additional cost may increase:

- \$75 per two shelf brackets\*
- \$95 per standard file storage bracket\*
- \$85 per 4 arm pipe racks\*

(\*Note: Prices are estimates. Take into consideration that new products will differ in pricing considerably when compared to used ones.)

### Door style

A storage container comes with a standard opening that is equipped with double swing doors at one end of the container. These double swing doors open the width of the container, providing easy access to the storage items. These doors are also lockable to secure and protect the contents.



You can, of course, customize the storage container with additional aftermarket doors. The same double swing doors can also be installed on the other end of the storage container at an additional cost.

If you wish, you can replace the standard swing doors with a heavy duty roll up door that provides a larger opening for loading/unloading. Cost effective roll up doors are constructed of 26 gauge galvanized steel and are equipped with sliding locks. The roll up door is often placed on storage containers used to store tractors, and other heavy industrial equipment.

Other types of available door options are: a three-foot-wide industrial door or six-panel wooden door with a metal skin. The industrial door is made of a solid panel of 16 gauge steel. It has deadbolt lock for security. The wooden door is lighter weight and, thus, less expensive.

With every modification, the prices rise. For example:

- \$100 to \$350 for non-customized personnel doors\*
- \$600 for 8'x8' steel roll up door (with optional double locks)\*

(\*Note: Prices listed are from websites that showcase pricing online. You would need to inquire about prices by contacting dealers directly.)

### Locking mechanisms

Another important consideration is locking mechanisms. When you decide on the container type, modifications, and additional door options, you should also investigate container locks. Prices for locking mechanisms can range in the following:

- \$85 for a bolt on lock box
- \$90 for a standard lock box
- \$15 for a standard padlock
- \$76 for a double crossbar lock

- \$87 for a double door porta bolt with lock.

### Sides and roof types

The main material used for the walls of storage containers is corrugated steel. In addition, you can also find walls made of an aluminum sheet, or plywood, or with fiberglass reinforced plastic coating. All these three types have different levels of important characteristics such as: susceptibility to corrosion, weight, strength, and resiliency with low to moderate material cost.

In order to accommodate over-height construction equipment, the container roof should be left open. Therefore, the storage container should have a removable steel roof. A forklift truck can easily lift the roof which weighs approximately 400 to 500 kg.

Most people opt for wooden floors. You might choose a different floor surface depending on the intended purpose of your storage unit. Additional costs might include:

- \$1000 to \$4,200 for custom roof, depending on size, material and number of containers
- \$50 to \$120 per square meter (w/o supply/install). Depending on floor type, prices will fluctuate.

Wood is a popular choice when people want to steer away from the hard steel look of the container. Some like the container's natural look. You will want to think about some paint coating either for appearance or added protection. This will, again, depend on the intended use.

From tool sheds to habitable structures, the design of your container is something you will need to envision. With many customization options, and several do-it-yourself guides available, you are surely well on your way to building an attractive and affordable unit that fulfills your needs.

## Specifications

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It isn't always easy to determine the most suitable storage container to meet your needs. Many features will affect the cost of your storage container. The type of storage container you purchase depends entirely on what you need to store and how large the items are. Heavy machinery like backhoe loaders, crawlers, skid steers, forklifts, and even motorized farm cultivators will require larger containers.

Typical industrial specifications:

| Size          | Length                   | Width                    | Height                    | Door Opening                      |
|---------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 20' standard  | 20' (Internal: 19'5.75") | 7'9.25" (Internal: 7'8") | 8'6" (Internal: 7'9.75")  | Width: 7'8"<br>Height: 7'6.25"    |
| 40' standard  | 40' (Internal: 39'5.25") | 8' (Internal: 7'5.625")  | 8'6" (Internal: 7'10.25") | Width: 7'8.25"<br>Height: 7'5.75" |
| 40' High Cube | 40' (Internal: 39'3.25") | 8' (Internal: 7'8.5")    | 9'6" (Internal: 8'10.25") | Width: 7'5.75"<br>Height: 8'5.75" |

Typical maximum payloads:

- 40': 58,600 lbs.
- 20': 48,325 lbs.

Most storage containers come in different grades, or condition. The base models of these units range in price from \$2,000 to over \$8,000.

Storage containers can often be used on farms, by construction companies, or town garages, to store machinery, materials, and even food products, as they are safe from all weather conditions and ensure the contents don't deteriorate.

### Materials

Typical storage containers are made of corrugated steel. These units are weather proof and will keep your materials, equipment, documents, and property safe from the elements. Storage containers may also be made of other materials including: plywood, wood, and fiberglass.

Fiberglass storage containers would be perfect for those in the agriculture industry. These units can be used to store perishable crops. When it comes to storing heavier items, wooden crates would be ideal because of their stability and rigidity.

### Add-ons

The more features you add to your purchase, the more the price will increase. For instance, a typical storage container comes with a simple locking mechanism of multiple locks to protect your assets. If you are storing valuable items, however, you can have your container armed with an alarm system.

You can also purchase a ramp. This would be beneficial if you are storing heavy items in your storage container. A ramp would make the loading and unloading of heavy machinery easier and would cause less damage to both the container and the machinery.

Other add-ons to consider include: paint colors, lockboxes, and partitions to convert your unit from a single area to multiple spaces. You can also purchase storage containers that have ventilation systems. This will allow you to work on your car or larger Do-It-Yourself tasks inside the container safely.

Depending on where you get your unit, the quality of the unit, and the add-ons you desire, the cost of your storage container can range from around \$2,000 to \$8,000.

## Questions to Ask Your Dealer

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Before making your purchase, the first thing you should ask your dealer about is if installation and delivery are included in the price. While the rise in popularity of these containers has increased the number of vendors who sell storage containers, your sales team may be located several hundred miles away and in turn, require more money for delivery.

If you live close to where your dealer is located, one thing you will want to ask about is if they know of any zoning regulations concerning where these containers can be installed. Some areas have residential regulations that won't allow them to be installed permanently at a personal address. In other areas, you will also see that these units can't be placed in the front of a building because of appearance. This issue is important to clarify with your dealer before you buy.

You will also want to ask about climate considerations within the units. Just like refrigerated trucks that transport food products around the country, you may need the same type of system in place depending on your intended use for the container. If you are storing products that need to be kept cool at all times, this is a possible add-on you will want to ask about.

Where you live and where your dealer is located will also affect whether the units are even available to you. If they aren't, you should ask when the expected delivery date would be and decide if you should wait or choose another vendor.

The ability to rent or lease a storage container is another must-ask question for those looking for a temporary solution to a problem. Some companies will allow you to rent their containers. However, the price could be steep compared to what you would pay if you bought the container outright.

Before making your decision to find a storage container vendor, you will want to ensure you are working with reputable companies. You will want to find a company that has a solid reputation and a history of good customer service. This information can be attained from most websites.

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