

Thoughts Regarding Transporting Models to the World Championships

By Richard Crapp

When it comes to crate building it depends on who is paying. If it is not you and it is being shipped make it out of 1/2" ply and wrap the model in vast quantities of bubble wrap. Fix the wheels to the bottom of the box with rubber bands and the tail with nylon stockings.

After some disasters with US airlines I stick with BA who have a outside luggage allowance for sports equipment such as Bikes, Canoes, Windsurfers, etc. At the time, the weight allowance was 23kg (check, as this was 14 years ago,) but if you have a Wife/Helper/etc traveling with you, they can also have the outside allowance. National US and continental airlines aircraft are sometimes smaller than International flights, so it might be better to check hold space. You can still have a hold luggage case and a cabin bag (Check this).

The two boxes below took my PT22 to Top Gun in 2014. Helper was Neil Tidy.

1/4 light ply fretted out with a router with triangular balsa in all the corners.



Lined with foam insulation to keep heat and dust out, and stuffed with bubble wrap. Tape the lid on with Gorilla tape so you do not need tools to open it at security. Put a spare roll of tape in the box as tape may be seen a weapon.



If you make the lid not flat the loaders might not pile things on top. Put some rails on the bottom in case they use a fork lift. Put copies of our Facilitation document on the lid. Have it translated if you are not from a English speaking country.

If the model is 32lb, or 15kg, it dose not leave a lot for the box @ 24kg. You might need to put other things in the box, tools, documents. Static props, but personal items such as clothes are not allowed.

So 2 passengers sharing two boxes works well.

We sometimes installed a cross brace, It helps if somebody sits on the box ! It could be a carbon tube but this will show up as metal when they put it through the X Ray. Another thing I forgot is to be sure and add a rope handle on each end.

The balsa triangle stock is completely adequate. I use plenty of white glue. The only time i had a model damaged was when i screwed the wing hold down to the box floor. Seemed a good idea at the time, but offered no flexibility. Much better to let it jiggle around a little on the wheels.

I have never removed the engine for transport. Rather not disturb it. I install a bar of wood in place of the prop and rubber band it to the box end allowing a little movement. Not doing this can break the firewall if/when the handlers drop the box, and then you have to explain to security why you have an drone engine !

It will smell of oil so a note explaining that it contains a smear of preserving oil might help. Better to ditch the tank and smell and put a new one unopened in the box.

Clear the outsize box with the airline when booking and try and get it in writing. Don't screw the lid down as you can not take a screwdriver through security. Tape it on as I suggested and add a spare roll in the box.

Last I heard, transmitters and batteries go hand luggage. Batteries for Electric models I have never done so will not offer any advice.

All this learned from 9 trips to Top Gun and 8 trips to World Championships.

Good Luck!
Richard Crapp