Shipping water-based products during the winter months requires special handling to protect against freezing temperatures. Commodities such as paints, coatings, stains, adhesives and solvents are particularly susceptible to freezing while in transit. Due to the complexities involved in providing protection from freezing, many transportation companies refuse to transport freezeable products during cold snaps, limiting the options available to businesses when they are needed most. With this in mind, there are a few steps businesses that ship and/or receive water-based solutions should take to avoid damages and delays in their supply chains.

Partner with a freight company with a track record of success in providing freeze protection. Providing a comprehensive Protect From Freezing less-than-truckload (LTL) service requires substantial investments in equipment, infrastructure, training and technology. Look for a freight carrier with a large fleet of heated and insulated trailers and heated transportation service centers throughout its network.

Ask questions ahead of time to avoid surprises. Does the carrier offer uninterrupted service regardless of temperature or day of the week? Does the carrier operate a large fleet of heated/insulated trailers or only rely on blankets to protect shipments? Are safeguards in place that enable the carrier to pick up your shipments on Fridays or before holidays and store your freight in heated facilities over the weekend?

Consider partnering with your transportation provider year-round. Freight carriers analyze business levels and customer relationships to help forecast future equipment and staffing needs. Building a strategic relationship with a specialized freight carrier helps to ensure capacity is available when protect-from-freezing needs arise.

Err on the side of caution when shipping temperature-sensitive freight. It may not be freezing on the day you ship or at the location you ship from, but winter weather is unpredictable. Unexpected delays add risk to water-based products in the winter. Shipping product that can be damaged by cold temperatures in unheated trailers during the winter is a gamble.
You cannot overvalue experience. Developing a network-wide protect-from-freezing service with a track record of success requires ongoing investments. Systems development, training, culture and discipline of processes are just as important as having enough equipment to do the job. The peace of mind and reliability that comes with using an experienced provider will help you improve customer service, control costs and streamline operations.

Businesses that ship and/or receive water-based products will find that many freight carriers will not transport their products during cold weather, leading to supply chain uncertainties and delays. Of the freight companies that will handle your shipments when the temperature drops, not all have adequate equipment, facilities and processes to provide reliable freeze protection throughout the winter season. Your company’s reputation is on the line if your customer uses a defective product, caused by it being frozen in transit. Evaluate your transportation options to prepare and protect your supply chain.

Learn more at aduepyle.com.