

# How to Collect and Ship Donated Goods to Haiti

1. First find a local shipper in your region who can get your collected goods to Haiti at no charge to you. Make sure they are a large reputable organization with an established track record. Contact your local Red Cross, United Way or Salvation Army and ask them. If they can't help you ask them to refer you to someone who can. Try charitable relief shippers (see [charitynavigator.org](http://charitynavigator.org)), major hospitals (who may be sending teams of doctors to Haiti) or large churches that may be working with Haitian relief organizations. If you are unable to find anyone we have partnered with two shippers in Florida, but you would have to arrange to get your donated goods to them. You could rent a truck and ask for donations to cover the cost. If you intend to do this contact us first to confirm the shipment. If you get a large donation, such as a container or truck load of medical supplies or new crutches, our shipping partner will arrange to pick up the goods. Do not continue until you have arranged some way for your collected items to get to Haiti. Collect only orthopaedic devices (crutches, canes, walkers, wheelchairs, leg and knee braces) and medical supplies. If you accept anything else you most likely will **NOT** find anyone willing to ship the goods you collect so you will have wasted time and effort. For example do NOT accept clothing.

2. Once you have made arrangements with a shipper arrange for transportation of the donated goods to the shipper. Try to get the use of a truck donated by someone or by a local truck rental company (do not bother with national chains).

3. Determine where, when and for how long you wish to collect goods. You may wish to set up an ongoing collection site at your workplace or home, or only hold a short term drive. Make sure you have fixed hours for donations and someone to receive the goods.

The best place for a short term drive is at a local hospital outpatient center on a Saturday afternoon 1 – 4 pm when they are closed. It must be on or near a major road or highway. Get permission from someone in charge at the hospital/center so you can park a truck in the parking lot and accept donations, maybe through a doctor who works there who can arrange permission (he/she will also help you with volunteers and to get the word out). Best to get it in writing by email if you can.

You may wish to arrange sponsors or partner with the local medical society (ask them to send out an email to local doctors, they can solicit volunteers to help and most will) or church, orthopaedic clinics (they will provide volunteers for short drives), retail stores or chains, businesses. Ask your sponsors if they have companies they can send out an email to, requesting volunteers, then have them do it right away. Have volunteers call you and list them with contact numbers. Always mention to the people you are speaking with the name of the organization who you have partnered with to get the collected goods to Haiti, to establish legitimacy.

4. Make up a flyer (in print, online and by email) with all information about your drive. The flyer is the key. Include all details: what you are collecting, when (days), the drop off hours, where you are collecting, you contact info. Request goods in good condition with all parts including tips, unless you are willing to refurbish or replace parts.

5. Post, email and/or give flyers to everyone. Get it posted on your city or community website. Promote it on Facebook and Twitter to get it viral. **The key is to get it viral.** Get it to the local churches, synagogues, regional Catholic dioceses, your local business owners and have them get it to their employees and tell each to send it to 10 people. Email or post it with the Chamber of Commerce, health providers, hospitals, nursing homes, **VFWs, American Legions, retirement homes, retirement communities**, disabled groups, physical rehabilitation clinics or centers, **orthopaedic clinics**, local service groups. Allow at least a week to get the word around, preferably two if it is for a short collection drive. Have flyers posted in stores; email them everywhere and to everyone. Notify your local newspapers, TV and radio stations by sending them a press release (or flyer) at least one week in advance with all the information.

6. **Notify CrutchesToHaiti.com** of your drive by completing the Register a Location form on our website for free online posting of your information. Give all requested information. Do this well in advance of your collection dates but no later than when you start giving out your flyer (people check our website to find a local drive or drop off location).

Name our website on your flyer, so people can go to it if they forget the day, time or location or want to tell others. We have a map function to make it easy for them to find you.

7. If you are doing a short term (1 or 2 day) collection drive at a specific collection site have 10 roadside signs made up. Put 5 on each side of the road warning drivers of the collection site ahead. Have a banner made up if possible or a larger sign identifying the Drop Off site. Arrange for volunteers to unload vehicles and to load a truck with the collected goods. Get bright orange t-shirts for volunteers to wear. Have hot dogs and drinks enough for all volunteers donated. Use a single number of someone's (your) phone, give it to everyone and have it on for 2 days after. Make a master list of all key people and cell phones for the weekend. Assign one person to keep a manifest with a count of all items donated by type.

8. Don't bother with receipts, this is for charity. Take pictures at your drive to document it. Have fun doing good for others. Thank everyone who donates.

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