



SELLER FULFILLED PRIME (SFP) SUCCESS PLAYBOOK

Your Complete Readiness & Compliance Checklist

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Seller Fulfilled Prime (SFP) lets you ship directly to Amazon Prime customers from your own warehouse, without relying on Amazon's fulfillment centers. Done right, it gives you:

- Control over inventory and operations
- Potentially lower fees vs. FBA for certain SKUs
- Faster restocks and flexibility for multi-channel sellers

But SFP isn't for everyone. The standards are high, the trial period is unforgiving, and costs — especially overnight rates and weekend surcharges — can quickly destroy margins.

This Playbook provides the complete checklist, key cost insights, and operational requirements to help you succeed in SFP and keep your Prime badge without burning cash.



SELLER FULFILLED PRIME (SFP) ONBOARDING CHECKLIST

Account & Enrollment Basics

- Active Professional Seller Account in good standing
- Enroll in SFP via Amazon Seller Central → Programs → Seller Fulfilled Prime
- Maintain excellent account health:
 - No unresolved A-to-z claims
 - Good customer metrics
- Register for Amazon Buy Shipping Services (mandatory for SFP)
- Configure SFP-specific shipping templates in Seller Central

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SFP Trial Period Requirements

To earn the Prime badge, sellers must complete a trial period with at least 50 Prime orders and meet these strict metrics:

- On-Time Shipment Rate: $\geq 99\%$
- On-Time Delivery Rate: $\geq 97\%$
- Buy Shipping Usage: $\geq 99\%$ of Prime orders must use Buy Shipping
- Cancellation Rate: $\leq 0.5\%$
- Tracking Rate: $\geq 99\%$
- Weekend Processing: Must ship orders on Saturday or Sunday if your shipping template requires it
- Prime Performance Metrics: Must be maintained beyond the trial

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Transit Times & Shipping Templates

- Offer 1-2 day Prime shipping coverage for target regions
- Create shipping templates that define:
 - Prime vs. Non-Prime service levels
 - Saturday/Sunday shipping if required
- Meet Amazon's regional coverage minimums:
- Nationwide or regional Prime coverage depending on business size
- Maintain valid shipping service mapping for:
 - Same-day
 - Next-day
 - Two-day

Important Lever: Many sellers fail here because their carriers can't reliably meet regional 1-2 day promises.

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Carrier & Service Level Setup

- Integrate with Buy Shipping:
 - UPS
 - FedEx
 - USPS
 - Amazon Partnered Carriers
- Negotiate competitive overnight and weekend rates
- Confirm carrier cutoff times for:
 - Weekdays
 - Saturday pickups
 - Sunday pickups (rare and limited to USPS in some regions)
- Establish contingency plans for carrier delays (e.g., premium overnight upgrades)

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Warehouse Operations & Staffing

- Same-day fulfillment for orders placed before your cutoff (often 2pm local)
- Weekend staffing if your template requires weekend ship dates
- Real-time order flow capability:
 - WMS integrations
 - Scanning and validation processes
- Sufficient inventory levels for fast-pick and pack
- Error-proofing measures for:
 - Correct carrier selection
 - Label generation
 - Packing SLAs

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Cost & Pricing Analysis

- Model all costs:
 - Overnight rates vs. ground
 - Saturday/Sunday surcharges
 - Buy Shipping fees
- Evaluate whether to increase prices on Prime-eligible SKUs to absorb costs
- Map shipping costs by zone to identify unprofitable regions
- Review margins carefully for:
 - Small, low-priced items (which can be crushed by high shipping costs)
 - Bulky or heavy items affected by dimensional weight charges

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Systems & Automation

- Implement rules in shipping software for:
 - Order cutoffs
 - Service-level mapping
 - Carrier auto-selection
- Automate order pulls from Seller Central every 15 minutes or faster
- Generate tracking numbers immediately upon shipment creation

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Returns & Customer Service

- Accept Amazon Prime returns seamlessly
- Configure auto-authorized returns as required by Amazon
- Develop a warehouse process for quick returns and refunds
- Maintain Amazon's buyer message response times

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Trial Order Planning

- Roll out SFP in a controlled way:
 - Start in a single region if possible
 - Consider running PPC ads to accelerate trial order volume
- Keep high-volume SKUs in stock to reach the 50-order trial minimum quickly
- Monitor metrics daily during trial to avoid disqualification

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Compliance & Documentation

- Maintain clear records:
 - Shipping manifests
 - Tracking evidence for dispute resolution
- Be ready to present evidence if Amazon questions your performance metrics

COST IMPACT EXAMPLES

Here's an example of the real cost differences between shipping methods:

Destination Zone	2-Day Ground Cost	Overnight Cost	Saturday Surcharge
Zone 2	\$7.50	\$25.00	\$12.00
Zone 5	\$9.00	\$32.00	\$12.00
Zone 8	\$12.50	\$48.00	\$14.00

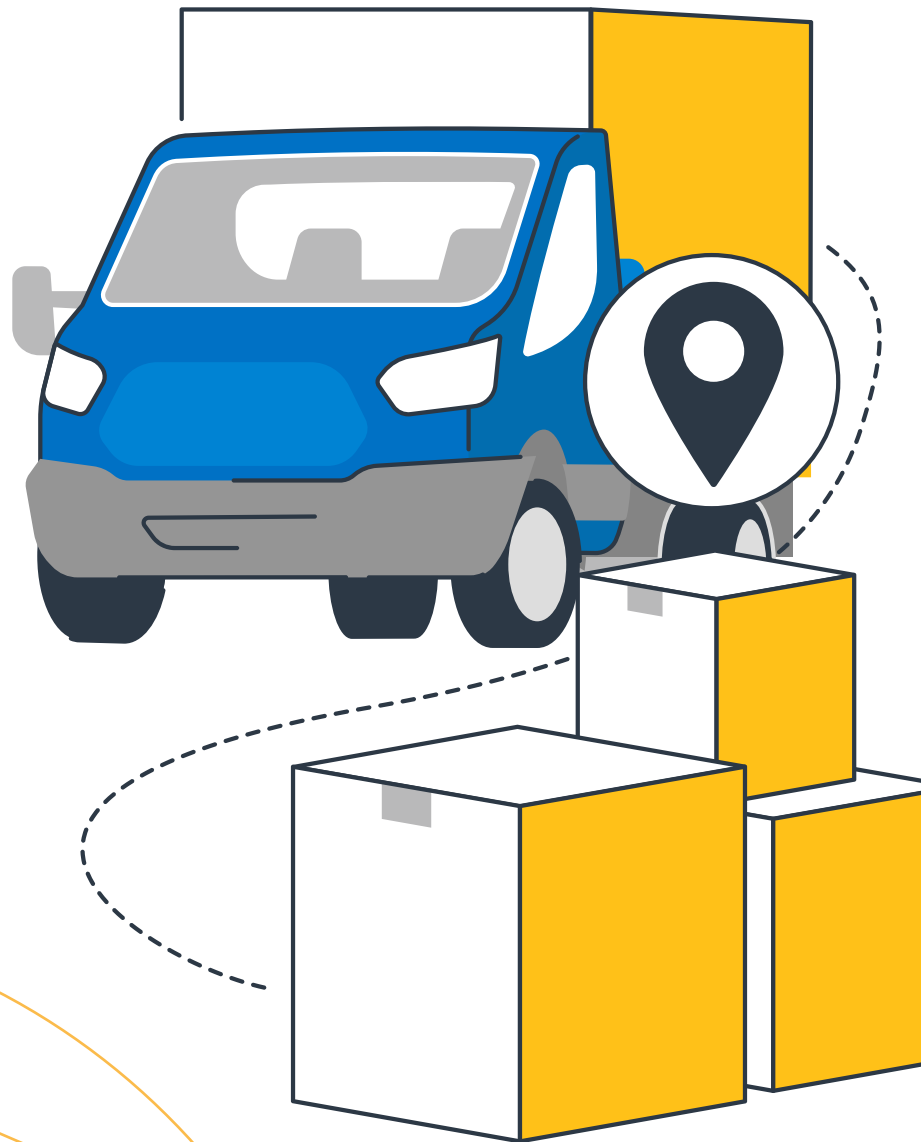
These costs quickly erode margins if you're not strategic about where you offer Prime.

PRIME-READY PRODUCT PROFILE

Ideal SFP products typically share these traits:

- Under 3 lbs in weight
- Small parcel dimensions
- Average selling price high enough to absorb shipping costs
- Stable, predictable demand
- Low return rates
- Minimal seasonal volatility

SFP is often not cost-effective for low-priced, bulky, or heavy products.



KEY LEVERS THAT MAKE OR BREAK SFP



Weekend Shipping

Weekend shipping is mandatory if you offer weekend Prime service. USPS is sometimes cost-effective for lighter items, but larger parcels often require UPS or FedEx, which impose significant Saturday surcharges. Limiting weekend Prime regions can help manage costs.



Overnight Rates

Shipping overnight to distant zones can exceed \$30–\$50 per package. Evaluate your carrier contracts and consider excluding certain zones from Prime eligibility if they're cost-prohibitive.



Cut-Off Times

Late order cutoffs improve sales but increase operational pressure for same-day shipping. Find a balance between conversion and feasibility.



Inventory Placement

Splitting inventory across multiple warehouses reduces your need for overnight shipping but increases your inventory holding costs. Many successful SFP sellers operate at least two regional nodes.



Product Size & Weight

Heavy or large items typically face high dimensional weight charges on air services, making SFP unsustainable for certain SKUs. Focus on smaller, lighter items where possible.



Carrier Selection

Not all carriers consistently meet Amazon's delivery promises in all regions. Avoid UPS SurePost and FedEx SmartPost for Prime orders; these are typically disallowed under SFP terms.



Trial Planning

Plan your trial volume to clear the 50-order threshold fast. Delayed trials risk errors creeping into your performance metrics, leading to rejection.

FAQ

Do I have to offer nationwide Prime shipping?

No. You can limit your shipping templates regionally if you prefer, but Amazon requires you to cover certain minimum regions for eligibility.

Can I exclude certain SKUs from SFP?

Yes. Not all products must be enrolled. Many sellers enroll only items suitable for fast shipping and sustainable costs.

Do I have to ship on weekends?

Only if your shipping templates offer weekend Prime delivery. Otherwise, you can choose to exclude weekends — but your Prime coverage area may be reduced.

What happens if I fail the trial?

Amazon may remove your eligibility for SFP. You'd need to address deficiencies and potentially reapply later.

PRO TIPS

- Test carrier performance before officially enrolling in SFP.
- Avoid nationwide Prime listings if costs are unmanageable in distant zones.
- Monitor performance daily during your trial period.
- Factor in Q4 peak surcharges, which can significantly increase overnight and weekend shipping costs.
- Ask yourself (and your team) hard questions:
 - Are you truly staffed for weekend shipping?
 - Do you understand overnight costs in all regions?
 - Can your margins support SFP's shipping demands?

NEXT STEPS

Contact your MyFBAPrep account manager to discuss modeling your SFP costs, mapping your regional shipping strategy, and building a custom rollout plan tailored to your SKUs and business goals.

