How-To Guide

Everything LoadForge Cargo 3D does, how to do it, and where its limits are. For version 1.0. Short videos sit at the top of the sections that have one.

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1. Start here

LoadForge plans how a show's gear goes onto trucks. The crew chief builds the pack in the app, then hands the crew paper: a Pack Sheet and Flip Labels. Stagehands never need the app, though you can send them a free view link to follow along and tick cases off.

From import to the dock

1. Tap **Settings**, then **Import**, and pick your pack list.
2. Pick the show color.
3. Take the suggested vehicles, or start from scratch.
4. Split departments across the vehicles.
5. Press **Auto-Arrange**. Pick a pack style and Pack By to change how it builds the truck.
6. Drag cases to fix anything, then check the pack in First Person or Play Load.
7. Print the Pack Sheet and Flip Labels from Settings, and save the pack in My Pack.

On show day

Give the crew the Pack Sheet, stick Flip Labels on the cases that ride flipped, and on a Mac put Second Screen on an external monitor so everyone can see the plan. Unload in reverse, last wall first.

GOOD TO KNOW

- A pack is an estimate. Leave room for last-minute adds.
- The first time you open the app, a guided tour walks you around. You can replay it from Settings, under Help, along with a Quickstart, Tips and the Mac shortcuts.
- To explore with real data, open My Pack and choose **Open Demo Pack**.

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2. The screen

- **Top row (changes the pack):** Settings holds Import, My Pack, printing, sharing and Help. Pack holds Auto-Arrange, the pack style and Pack By. Edit is Undo and Redo.

- **Second row (changes your view):** Tool sets what a drag does: the hand turns the view, the cross selects cases, the ruler measures. View switches between the fleet, First Person and Play Load. Show turns on markers, the heatmap, department colors and straps.
- **Vehicle cards:** every truck on the show has a card showing how full it is. Tap a card to work on that truck.
- **3D view:** the trucks and everything in them.
- **Panel tabs: Pack** is the manifest (the list of every case). **Add** has manual entry, your case library and presets. **Flags** sets how a case may ride. **Check** is the load-day checklist.

GOOD TO KNOW

- On iPad and Mac the panels can be resized by dragging their edges. On iPhone the panel sits at the bottom and slides up.
- The numbers under the 3D view show items, how many are loaded, weight, and how much of the floor and volume is used.

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3. Importing a pack list

Tap **Settings**, then **Import**, and pick a file. On a Mac you can also drag the file onto the app.

What it reads

- **Rental pack list PDFs** with case sizes written like *25 L x 25 W x 30 H*.
- **Excel or CSV files** with these columns: Name, Length, Width, Height, Weight, Qty. Sizes are inches and pounds, or metric if you switch units in Settings.
- **Text:** a text file, or rows pasted into the Import window. Pack list rows look like `qty | description | barcode | 25 L x 25 W x 49.75 H | weight`.
- **LoadForge pack files** (`.loadforge`) that someone exported and sent to you.

The Import window

- **Add to the pack or replace it.** Adding lets two jobs join one pack.
- **Pick a vehicle.** The app suggests vehicles and shows whether each truck you already have has room.
- **Manifest and Visualizer, or Manifest Only.** Manifest Only brings the list in without placing anything in a truck, so you can load by hand.

After a new import

The app walks you through three steps: the show color, the vehicles (Use These Vehicles or Start From Scratch), then which departments ride in which vehicle. You can turn these steps off in Settings.

LIMITS

- Scanned PDFs (pictures of text) can't be read.
- A case that arrives without a size is marked **NO DIMS** and will not be packed until you add its size. The size pop-up for these cases uses inches.
- In pack list rows, the weight is the total for the line, so 4 cases at 720 lb are read as 180 lb each.
- Weights matter. If your list has no weights, weight totals and Axle Balanced packing can't be trusted.
- Importing needs Pro.

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4. Vehicles and the fleet

- **Fleet view** is the main view and shows every vehicle on the show side by side. Double-click (or double-tap) a truck to open just that one, and again to go back.
- **+ Add Vehicle** adds a truck, trailer or van from the list, or a **custom vehicle** with your own inside dimensions.
- **Change** on a vehicle card swaps it for a different vehicle.
- **Set Dept** sends a department to that truck. Cases in that department then route to it on their own.
- **Truck colors** come from the department, or from the show's gaffe tape color.
- **Weight limits** can be set per truck, and the app warns when a truck is over.
- **Truck Size & Time** (in the Pack panel) suggests vehicles for the gear you have and estimates how long the load will take.

LIMITS

- Vehicle suggestions only offer enclosed vehicles, not flatbeds or pickups.
- Load time is an estimate. It gets closer to your crew's pace as you use the load timer in Check.
- Weights are planning numbers. Always verify axle weights on a certified scale.

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5. Adding cases

Open the **Add** tab.

- **Manual entry:** type a name, size, weight and quantity.
- **Case library:** every case you enter or import is remembered, so the next show takes less typing. Drag one from the library into a truck.

- **Presets:** common cases, plus **pallets** in nine sizes.

You can drag a case from the manifest, the library or the presets straight into the 3D view.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> - Adding a case never moves what is already in the truck.
> - Pallet preset heights and weights are estimates. Change them to match yours.
> - Adding cases needs Pro.

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6. Flags

Flags tell the app how a case model may ride. Set them before you arrange: they are how the app learns what your crew would never do. Open the **Flags** tab. Every kind of case in the pack has a card there with:

- **Stacking:** auto, never stack, or stack up to a maximum.
- **Load on top:** auto, load on top OK, or nothing on top.
- **Wheels:** wheels down only, wheels up OK, or any side OK.
- **Placement:** auto, goes up top, stays on the floor, or Attic OK for light, long or odd-shaped gear that may ride on the attic shelf (see section 12).
- **Keep:** a rule for a case that must ride one way or sit in one place (see section 7).
- **Dolly:** tell a dolly which case model it carries. The dolly and its cases are then packed as one load.

> GOOD TO KNOW
>
> - Flags belong to the case model, so they apply to every case of that kind and are remembered between shows.
> - **Wheels up OK:** Auto-Arrange flips a flagged stacked case only when nothing tall is behind it. Flipped cases get a Flip Label when you print.

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7. Keep rules and Pin

Keep

Use Keep (in Flags) for a case that must ride one way or sit in one place at every show. A Keep rule can set:

- which side goes down,
- which truck wall it rides against,

- which section of the truck it goes in (nose, middle or doors),
- whether the rule is a **Must** or a **Prefer**.

Consoles start out riding on their back. When you move the same kind of case by hand again and again, the app suggests a Keep rule for it.

Pin

Pin a case you have placed by hand (right-click or long-press, then Pin) and Auto-Arrange will leave it exactly there.

> LIMITS
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> - Keep sections are thirds of the truck, not thirds of the load.
> - Keep rules stay on your device. They don't travel inside an exported `.loadforge` file.

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8. Auto-Arrange

Press **Auto-Arrange** any time. It builds the truck in flat walls from the nose back, fills gaps with cases that fit, and checks that every case is supported and nothing heavy sits on something that can't take it.

Pack style

- **High & Tight:** tall, full walls that use the least floor.
- **Axle Balanced:** spreads weight along the truck.
- **Flat Pack:** keeps the load low.

Pack By

On top of any style, Pack By sets what the app reaches for first: **Best Fit** (the default), Weight, Size, Department or Name.

What it arranges

Auto-Arrange arranges what is already in the vehicle. The arrow next to the button offers **Everything**, which also brings in cases that are on the manifest but not yet in a truck.

LIMITS

- Auto-Arrange is a smart, safe starting plan built on how crews load. It is not a physics test. Use your judgment on the dock.
- **Pack By** changes the truck. **Sort** in the manifest only changes the order of the list, to help you find things.
- Pinned, angled and hand-placed cases stay put, and everything else goes around them.
- Cases marked NO DIMS are skipped.

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9. Moving cases by hand

- **Tools:** the hand (Move View) turns the view. The cross (Select Cases) selects and drags cases. Select several to move them as a group.
- **Drag** a case to a new spot. It snaps against walls and other cases and can be stacked.
- **Case menu:** right-click or long-press a case or a manifest row for Pin, Stop, Department, Vehicle, Keep rule, Flags, Flip, Spin, Put In or Take Out, Copy, Paste and Remove.
- **Undo and Redo** are in Edit. Cut, Copy, Paste and Duplicate work too. Pasted cases are tagged COPY.
- **Select** and **Select All** are in the Pack panel.

Loading by hand, row by row

- **Put In** places a case from the manifest into the truck.
- **New Row** starts a fresh row. It stays lit, with a line on the floor, until a case uses it.

Clearing

- **Clear Visualizer** empties the 3D view and keeps the manifest.
- **Clear All** removes everything, and asks first.

The manifest

Sort by packing order, name, weight, department, size, not packed or packed. Each vehicle's list can be minimized.

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10. Rotate, flip and spin

- **Spin** turns a selection a quarter turn in place. It works on dolly stacks too.
- **Flip** puts a case wheels up, or back down.
- **Rotate** opens a panel with **Turn** (a full 360), **Tilt** and **Roll**. Drag the rings, or use the preset steps.

LIMITS

- Tilt and Roll work on one case at a time.
- An angled case pins itself and warns when it touches another case.
- Angled and tilted cases reserve the whole box around them, so Auto-Arrange won't fill their empty corners.

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11. Departments and stops

Departments

Give cases a department (audio, lighting, video and so on) from the case menu or the **Departments** button in the Pack panel. Departments are yours to rename, recolor, add and remove. Assign a department to a truck with **Set Dept** and its cases route there on their own.

Stops

For a run with more than one drop, give departments or single cases a stop number, up to 5 stops. Then pack **By Stop**: the last stop rides nearest the nose and the first stop is at the doors, so each drop comes off without digging.

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12. Attic, straps and load bars

Attic

The attic is a shelf made of decking beams across the truck, for light, long or odd-shaped gear. Turn it on for a truck, set its position and its weight limit, and flag the gear that may ride there as **Attic OK**. The load order then weaves floor and attic together.

Restraints

Turn on straps under Show. The app places e-track straps and load bars in real gaps, never through a case. Load bars center on the exposed part of a stack.

LIMITS

- The attic needs a weight limit before it will take gear.
- You set the attic's position by hand, and the app doesn't track how many beams or load bars you own.
- Restraints shown are a suggestion. Secure the load to your own standards.

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13. The 3D view

- **Turn, pan and zoom** with the hand tool: drag to turn, pinch or scroll to zoom.
- **Orientation cube:** tap a face, edge or corner to look from there, or drag it.
- **View menu:** jump to a preset view, and lock the view so it can't be turned by accident.
- **Fit** and **Fill** frame the vehicle from any angle.
- **Show:** the heatmap (weight), distance markers, sections, wheels and orientation tags, department colors and straps.
- **3D labels** can be hidden in Settings.

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14. First Person

Choose **First Person** under View to stand inside the truck and walk the pack the way the crew will see it. You can move and stack cases from inside. On a Mac, walk with W A S D or scroll.

Walk it before you print. You will spot a bad wall faster than from above.

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15. Play Load

Play Load shows each case going in, in order. Use play and pause, step forward and back, change the speed, or drag the scrubber.

The load order is physical: a case goes in only once its path from the doors is clear and whatever it sits on is already in.

LIMITS

- Play Load is an animation of the plan, not a physics test.
- It plays loading only. To unload, work in reverse, last wall first.

16. Measure

Pick the ruler tool and tap two points. The ends snap to case edges and truck walls. The app then lists the cases that would fit the space you measured, or the room left at the doors.

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17. Printing and files

All of these are in **Settings**.

- **Pack Sheet:** a printable checklist of the pack in load order.
- **Flip Labels:** labels for cases that ride flipped. Each is half a letter page, two to a sheet.
- **Save PDF:** the Pack Sheet as a PDF file.
- **Export Pack:** a `.loadforge` file you can send to anyone with the app, or keep as a backup.
- **Export PNG:** a two-page picture of the truck.
- **Crew Video:** records Play Load to a video file you can text to the crew.
- **Show Report:** a PDF of planned against actual after the show.

> LIMITS
>
> - Printed text is 9 point or larger, to match rental pack lists.
> - Export PNG covers the truck you have open, not the whole fleet.
> - Show Report only shows savings from numbers you enter yourself. It doesn't guess.
> - On the Mac, saving opens a Save dialog. On iPhone and iPad it opens the share sheet.
> - Someone viewing a shared pack on a view link can't print or export.

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18. Check on load day

The **Check** tab is the pack as a checklist, in load order.

- Tick each case off as it goes in.
- If your pack list had barcodes, a barcode scanner connected to the device can tick cases off by scanning.
- Press **Start Load** when the first case rolls and **Finish Load** at the end. The app times the load and uses it to make future time estimates closer to your crew's pace.
- What was actually loaded is kept as an **As-Loaded** record on the Pack Sheet.

With live sharing on, everyone's ticks show up on every device (see section 20).

19. Plan Return

Plan Return (in Settings) builds the pack for the trip home. Mark anything that is staying behind, and the app makes a return pack from the rest. Your outbound pack is saved first, so you don't lose it.

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20. Live sharing

1. Open **Settings**, then **Share Live**.
2. Send an **edit link** (can change the pack) or a **view link** (can only look and tick cases off in Check).
3. The green **Live** tag at the top shows who is connected. Tap it to send more links, stop sharing, or leave.

Changes travel case by case. If two people change different cases at the same moment, both changes are kept. A device that drops out catches up when it reconnects.

LIMITS

- Starting a share needs an internet connection.
- Sharing live and using an edit link need Pro. Someone without Pro who opens an edit link joins as a viewer. View links are free.
- Viewers can't edit, print or export.
- When you join someone's pack, whatever you had on screen is saved to My Pack first, and comes back when you leave.
- A pack that has been stopped can't be reopened from an old link. Ask for a new one.
- If a link won't open, make sure LoadForge is installed, then tap the link again.
- A shared pack that nobody touches for 60 days is removed from the sharing service. The copy on your device is not affected.

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21. My Pack and Settings

My Pack

Your saved packs. Open, rename or delete a pack (Undo brings a deleted pack back), see the vehicle count for each, and open the Demo Pack. The app reopens the pack you were last working on.

Settings

- **Appearance:** match the device, dark, or light.

- **3D labels:** show or hide.
- **Units:** feet and pounds, or metric.
- **Truck Size & Time after an import:** on or off.
- **Help:** Guided Tour, Quickstart, Tips and Shortcuts.

LIMITS

- Packs are saved on the device you made them on. They don't sync between your devices on their own. To move a pack, use Export Pack and open the file on the other device, or share it live.
- Deleting the app deletes its saved packs. Export the ones you want to keep first.

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22. On the Mac

- **Second Screen** opens a second window showing the same pack with its own view picker. Put it on an external monitor at the dock.
- **Menu bar:** the Edit menu and a Pack menu, with shortcuts.
- **Drag files** onto the app to import them.
- **Right-click** a case for the case menu.

Keyboard shortcuts

Turn the view	**V**
Select cases	**B**
Finish selecting, or leave Focus	**Esc**
Move a selected case	**Arrow keys**
Lift or lower it	**Shift + Up / Down**
Move it 1 inch	**Option + Arrows**
Walk in First Person	**W A S D or scroll**
Play Load: pause, step	**Space, Left, Right**
Zoom	**+ and -**
Undo / Redo	**Cmd Z / Shift Cmd Z**
Copy / Paste / Cut	**Cmd C / Cmd V / Cmd X**

Duplicate	**Cmd D**
Select all	**Cmd A**
Remove	**Delete**
My Pack	**Cmd O**
Import	**Cmd I**
Pack Sheet	**Cmd P**
Flip Labels	**Cmd L**
Export PNG / Export Pack	**Cmd E / Shift Cmd E**
Auto-Arrange	**Cmd R**
Fleet or one truck	**Cmd F**
Second Screen	**Shift Cmd N**
Show the shortcut list	**?**

LIMITS

- The Mac app needs a Mac with Apple silicon.

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23. Free and Pro

- **Free:** open a pack someone shares with you, see the 3D plan and Play Load, and tick cases off live in Check. You can also open the Demo Pack to try the app.
- **Pro** ($19.99 a month or $199 a year, with a 14-day free trial): build your own packs. Importing, adding cases, and sharing a pack live with edit links all need Pro.
- **Trial:** you're only charged if you keep Pro past the 14 days.
- **Cancel:** in your device's Settings, tap your name, then Subscriptions, then LoadForge.
- **New device or reinstall:** open the paywall and tap **Restore purchase**, signed in with the same Apple ID. Pro covers your iPhone, iPad and Mac on that Apple ID.
- **Refunds:** Apple handles payments, so refunds are requested at reportaproblem.apple.com.

Prices are in US dollars and vary by country.

24. Limits to know

The short list, all in one place.

- A pack is a plan and an estimate, not a physics test. Use your judgment on the dock and verify axle weights on a certified scale.
- Scanned PDFs (pictures of text) can't be read.
- Cases with no size (NO DIMS) are not packed until you add one.
- Packs live on the device. They don't sync between devices on their own.
- Keep rules don't travel in exported pack files, and Keep sections are thirds of the truck.
- Tilt and Roll work on one case at a time, and angled cases reserve the box around them.
- Vehicle suggestions only offer enclosed vehicles.
- Pallet preset heights and weights are estimates.
- The attic doesn't count your load bars, and you set its position by hand.
- Export PNG covers the open truck only.
- Live sharing needs a connection to start, and runs between Apple devices with the app installed.
- Play Load shows loading only.