

"Bruce McElhoe" <brucem@theworks.com>

John,

I moved my Long-EZ very successfully in a 40-ft container from Hawaii to the U.S. mainland. I got good advice from three friends that had made a similar move and from my son, who works for a major container handling company. I'll try to pass that advice on to you.

I shored up the airplane with two big loads in mind. One is jostling on the dock that might include a drop of a few feet, the other is vibration from trucking the container to and from the dock.

There are usually no attach points in the container, except you can screw into the floor. So your shoring has to jam across corners or floor to ceiling.

I loaded my personal household effects in the front of the container and saved the back half for the airplane. Perhaps your Q-1 could go in the front of the container, in any case, save the back of the container for the Long-EZ.

The wings were supported up near the ceiling on two H frames-made with 2x4 posts jammed floor to ceiling (screwed into the floor) with a beam between them. I made cradles to fit the curvature of the wing. (A friend supported his wings on slings, leading edge down. This was good for dock handling, but he got some rubbing during trucking.) The fuselage fits in nose forward on a 45-degree angle. The nose rests on the floor, near the center of the container, well padded, and supported with chocks screwed into the floor. Straps tied the nose down tightly to preclude rubbing.

We supported the major weight of the airplane on the prop extension (propeller removed). I figure the engine mount would easily support the roughly 500-pound weight by at least five times. Build an X-frame by jamming 4x4s into the corners of the container, just inside the door. A plywood gusset at the X ties it all together and supports the prop extension a little above the center of the door opening, just inside the door (where a fork lift can reach it).

You can then brace each end of the strake / center section into its respective corner. These braces won't carry a lot of weight, but they will prevent the airplane from contacting the container. I simply bolted a 2x6 to the wing-attach hard points. The gear does not support any weight. You will have to remove the lower axle, and perhaps both, to fit in the container.

We loaded the fuselage using a fork lift to support the prop extension, a small dolly under the nose, and friends guiding each strake (wrapped in carpet). A loading dock is convenient, but not essential. I had one for loading, made it very-EZ. But, we unloaded without a loading dock- several guys let the nose down gently.

We used lots of carpet scraps, rope, bungee cords, and cargo straps. My airplane arrived without a single scratch or abrasion.

I wish you the same success. Please e-mail if you have any questions.

Bruce McElhoe Long-EZ N64MC Reedley, California

Answering:

I am shortly to move internationally and wish to move my Long Eze (And Q1!) in the most secure manner. I would be grateful to hear from anyone who has done it successfully, and perhaps as importantly anyone who did it less successfully in order that we might all learn from previous experience.
John, NZ