

iPhone Catastrophic Damage & Ship-Out Guide

Standard Operating Procedure · Companion to Apple VMI Guide (Article 111437) · Applies to iPhone

WHAT'S A SHIP-OUT?

A device with catastrophic damage can't be repaired in-store — it has to go to Apple's depot for repair or whole-unit replacement. Flag it before check-in, not after.

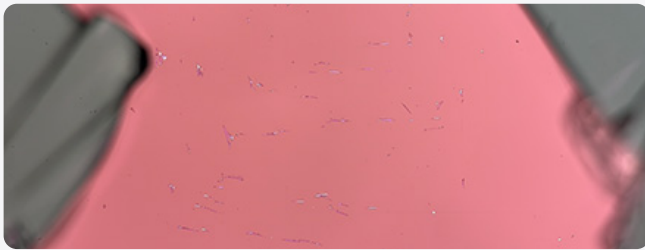
CHECK THE BACK FIRST

Look up this model in GSX parts. Some iPhones use a separate, replaceable back glass panel; others use a one-piece rear system fused to the frame. Rear-system phones are far more likely to be a ship-out when the back is damaged — there's no simple panel swap.



If damage looks catastrophic — or even close — do NOT check in the phone unless the customer pre-approves a ship-out first. Apple depot turnaround is 7–10 business days on average, and any data not backed up to iCloud will be lost.

CATASTROPHIC DAMAGE — SHIP-OUT RED FLAGS



HIDDEN LIQUID DAMAGE

No visible damage? Test-shoot a blank surface

Condensation or a hairline crack behind the lens often isn't visible by eye. Open Camera, point at a plain white or light surface, and take a photo. The image above is a real example of that test photo — warped, hazy, or discolored like this instead of a clean shot means damage or moisture is trapped behind the glass.



SWOLLEN BATTERY

Screen bending or lifting from the frame

A swollen battery pushes the display up and out, bending the enclosure and separating the screen from the frame at the edges. A phone that visibly bulges or rocks on a flat surface is a ship-out.



BACK GLASS

Missing back glass pieces, not just cracks

A cracked back glass is often repairable in-store. Actual missing chunks — where you can see gaps or exposed material, not just crack lines — is catastrophic. Ship it out.



ENCLOSURE / FRAME

Frame split, antenna gap, or severe bend

A visible gap where the metal frame has pulled away from the body, or an enclosure that's noticeably bent or split — even without missing glass, this is catastrophic.

WHEN IT'S CLOSE

- Not sure? Treat it as a ship-out and get customer pre-approval before check-in.
- Cracked glass or a scuffed enclosure alone is usually still repairable in-store — it's missing pieces, splits, and severe bends that push it to ship-out.
- Document damage with photos in the repair record either way.