



Uplift Bra Sorting Instructions

Why Sort?

These bras are going to places where few women own bras, very few know how to fit them and no one has seen a maternity or mastectomy bra until Uplift goes in.

If we send nursing and mastectomy to the hospitals, and train nurses, we do not waste them.

If we send the right mix of sizes for the population we don't waste them. Big ones go to the Pacific Islands generally, small to Asia & PNG.

Don't routinely wash them!

Donors usually do before donating, and recipients do before wearing, and sometimes in between they get fumigated anyway. Once the numbers build up, the water and time involved are prohibitive. Please do wash the occasional thing that is in good nick but embarrassingly grubby.

What condition bras do we send?

In Size 8-16, A-D cup, we send undamaged bras with elastic in good condition- elastic that has some bounce left.

Bras with minor damage are acceptable in the rare categories, 18+ mastectomy & maternity. Even if the elastic is stretched out, and it is a little stained, a maternity bra that will hold a pad will catch leaks, and that provides dignity.

In all categories, the quality of first world bras far exceeds anything these women can hope to access in their lives. When sorting bras with a Fijian woman, I was about to throw one away for minor damage to elastic when she said, "But the quality, they can't get his quality!" and she made me send it. Every single bra that goes in is significant, so never waste a functional bra.

To put your decisions in context, this is from 2012 Report of Distribution, Solomon Islands:

"In the Solomon Islands it is quite difficult to access a comfortable bra. Some of the second hand shops sell bras but mostly women have to buy their bras from the Chinese Trade Stores. These bras have some problems; they come in smaller sizes, are made of nylon and perish quickly in tropical conditions. You cannot buy maternity bras or mastectomy bras in country. For the women to be given free bras is an unbelievable experience for all of them. Women feel a tremendous obligation to meet the needs of their families, and so for any women in the village to spend money buying a bra for herself can almost be seen as an unforgivable sin. The priority for women's spending is food and education needs of children."



Size Conversions chart, for when you read labels and get confused.

The sizing system around the world is a mess. Subtract 22 from an Inch size to get an Australian size.

As shown below, an Aus AA is a UK A, an Aus D is a UK DD. Manufacturers will follow various cup labelling systems within the same country. AARGH!. Cups go up to R, but we've never seen any over JJ.

Australia ("size")	UK & US (inch) Subtract 22 for Aus size.	France (cm)	"International"	Cup Grades Aus, US	Cup Grades UK, France
8	30	80	70	AA	A
10	32	85	75	A	B
12	34	90	80	B	C
14	36	95	85	C	D
16	38	100	90	D	DD
18	40	105	Etc.	E	E
20	42	110		F	F

Sorting categories

Our 3 main categories are:

Size 8-16 A-D cup good condition,
This will be ¾+ of what you sort.

Size 18+ B-D cup (18, 20, 22, 24 etc)-
Rare and precious, and we send them only where they are needed.

Nursing bras,
All sizes. All cup sizes. In many countries these are not available at all.
Nursing crop tops are included here.



Strapless bras- Put them appropriate box for their size. If you've got loose straps, toss them in or attach them. If not the woman receiving may improvise with ribbon etc. You can't improvise a cup though.

Bras with foam / water / oil filled cups go in. The happiest woman Liz ever fitted was a B cup in an E cup society. With a filled bra on, she suddenly looked more like everyone else, less conspicuous. Crop top, front closing and formless styles are much appreciated too.

Bras with one underwire missing: if you can remove the other underwire, it becomes a useful bra.

Everything else: These items will rarely need a whole box unless you are sorting 3,000 or so bras. Please bag them up separately and toss them in one general box, listing the types included on the outside of the box.

E cup plus, any size. These are hard to find in the first world, impossible in the places we serve.

Mastectomy bras- have a pocket lining the entire cup which will hold the prosthesis. Rare, but vital, and unavailable in the countries we serve. Prosthetic breasts and soft breast forms are MUCH appreciated also. If possible keep the prosthesis and the relevant bras together. If the prosthesis is in its box, lift out the plastic mould, and put the bras that belong with that prosthesis underneath it.



Bathers- these go to coastal women who stand in the water and fish, or who dive for octopus, shells or beche de mere.

New Underpants & Any Socks- If in good condition put them in, they are needed. If small numbers, they can be tossed in with the relevant size bras. If we get a box full of new undies we celebrate. A girl without undies doesn't go to school during her period. We generally cannot resist sending matching

undies with their bra clipped through the leg hole, even if used. They don't come in often enough to be a waste of space, and we figure the woman receiving can choose to wear the undies or use them to tie her taro plants to their stakes.

Petite bras: Size 8 and 10 A and B cups. These are not useful in some countries where the girls are generally a size 12 before they start developing. They are vital in countries with smaller frame people. Often we will only get a few of these per thousand bras donated, in which case they go in as above. If you get 20 of 30 at once, please sort them out separately, and they will be shipped where needed. Teenagers everywhere are self-conscious and a 10A bra that prevents nipple show is very welcome.

Things to throw in your bin:

Pseudo bras for 2-3 year olds,

U-bras, as illustrated right.

Bedroom lingerie

Bras needing repair, with holes, dead elastic, or hard curly straps from the drier being too hot.

Shapewear, control garments, bodysuits etc.

Used G-strings, (we kid you not.)

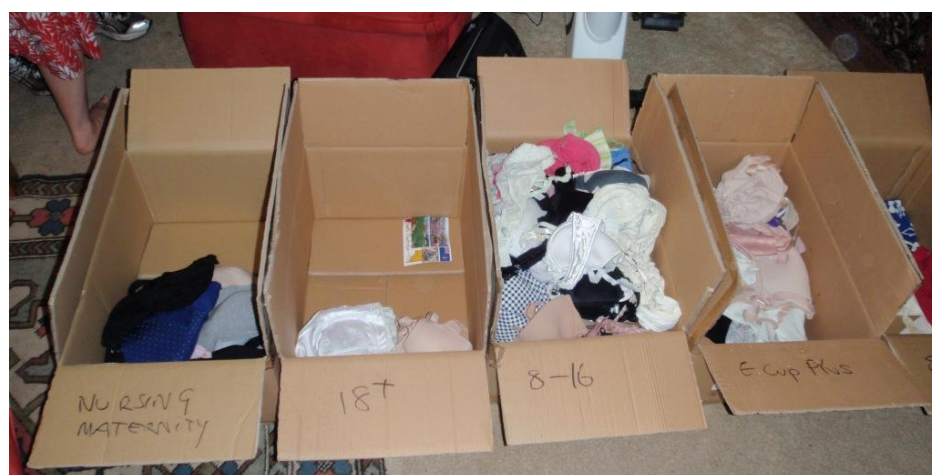


- Uplift does keep a box of the silliest items ever donated, which is great fun. Items that you think qualify may be forwarded, labelled accordingly. If you add to the collection we will send pictures of the current silliest items for your amusement. Like the undies with the zip...

At the first sign of dried grass, move your sorting outdoors if possible. Bras that have been linked up into a long line and laid out around an oval or lake will usually have grass with them, no matter how much we beg the people who want the publicity photo not to do this. We really can't send plant materials with the bras, so they have to be shaken off. Sometimes the crop top styles will be TIED to their neighbours. Ugh.

Speed Sorting Tips!

Set out a line of cardboard boxes, labelled with the categories.



Find a size 18 with a readable tag, and fold it in half at centre front, and lay it out on its "side". Once bras stretch a bit the effective size warps a little, so just use your size 18 bra as a rough measuring device. If any bra is that size or bigger, toss it in the 18+ box.



The fastest way to sort is by underwire- if a bra doesn't have one, check for nursing bra clips at the top of the cup, or press studs at the bottom of the cup.

Pick a bra off the pile, classify it, and throw!

NB It is tempting to toss in other **personal items** for women, like perfume or jewellery etc. but these may break, and if not declared on a packing label may cause trouble with Customs.

Boxes/packaging to Use

Please use **no packaging materials** that are not bio- degradable. We are stuck with packing tape, sadly. There is no rubbish disposal system in many places.

Please keep **box sizes** to apple/pear box size, which hold about 80 bras each, and weighs about 8-10 kilogram. That is the maximum we want volunteers lifting, both in Australia and the place receiving bras.

These boxes must be robust. They will often go into your transport, then into our storage, into our transport, into a container, out of the container, into transport, into an NGO's storage, into 2-3 lots of transport that will take them to their final destination. The last transport may be an open canoe.

Please stuff the boxes full enough that they will not collapse when other boxes are stacked on top of them. Please do not over-fill making the top of the box domed, as this causes landslides in the warehouse and shipping container.

When sealing the boxes please do not four-fold the corners as it leaves a lip that catches when one box is moved over another in a warehouse situation. Fold them flat and tape along the long join.

Wrong.



Right.



Labelling the boxes

We need to **label each box** so customs know what's in it.

Write on the end of the box please, so it can be read in a warehouse situation. We need, in big writing, broad texta, the type, (Nursing, 8-16, 18+)



You may have to tape on a label if the box has too much print on it, or is a dark colour, (the boxes illustrated are the limit of what you can use without labels.) **Broad packing tape around all 4 sides of the label is the only way to avoid tearing/label loss.** Boxes rub together in transit and when handled, and thin sticky tape falls off very easily.

Thank you for helping.