

Covers, Cases, Cardboard Boxes, Blankets. - Drum Cases Discussed.

First, let's examine the three basic groups: ATA Cases These "ultimate protection" cases are usually custom built from plywood. They feature special recessed latches, heavy duty hinges and are typically covered outside with a waterproof laminate and lined inside with thick foam cut to fit the shape of item being transported. To qualify as an ATA Case, the case must conform to the Air Transport Association's Specification 300 requirements. The material and manufacturing methods meet or exceed the ATA case specifications. The tests involved with becoming ATA 300 compliant are conducted to ascertain if an ATA shipping case will withstand the rigors of being shipped a minimum of 100 times. These cases are very expensive. Unless you are touring with a major act, where the Road Crew stacks tons of equipment into the tractor trailer rigs, these are probably too big and too heavy to be practical and fit into the vehicle you normally use to transport your equipment.

Hard Cases They are called "hard cases" generically. The original ones were made of vulcanized fiber by companies like Humes and Berg. This material was developed many years ago to make "sample cases" for traveling salesmen. Humes and Berg took this material and made drum cases (and other musical equipment cases) that quickly became the industry standard through the 1980's. Although the "fiber style" cases are still available, they are not as desirable as the now popular molded plastic cases. The old fiber cases do tend to warp, absorb moisture, and even tear. The newer style molded plastic cases are scratch resistant, water resistant, impact resistant, and therefore offer much better protection for your drum. They also available with foam interiors which adds another level of protection. Some companies like XL Specialty Percussion, now offer designs (i.e. the Protector Elite Series) that eliminate the need for foam.

Soft Covers They are called "soft covers" generically, dating back to the old canvas covers made with Macintosh type material in the 50's and 60's. Today, with modern materials, the covers are well designed zipper bags. There are many styles and materials to choose from today, including vinyl, synthetic leather, various types of canvas-like material, nylon, Cordura, and even leather. Many covers also feature soft protective linings and reinforcement in the areas where the most wear and stress occurs.

So How Do I Choose What's Best For My Needs If you are going to carry your own drums and you will transport and store them very, very carefully, then Covers may be a good alternative for you. They are lightweight and will not scratch or tear the upholstery in your vehicle. However, they offer Little if any Protection from load-in/load-out impact or (horrors!) being dropped. In my opinion, covers are practical Only for people who are Very Protective of their drums when they are transported or stored. Otherwise, I Do Not recommend them. When in storage, care needs to be taken that they will not be knocked over or have anything heavy or that will pierce them placed upon them. Remember they are called Covers, because that's all they are - a soft bag. If you play lots of one-nighters and transport your gear in the back of a truck or in a trailer, etc. then you most likely need molded cases for your drums. These are, after all, Cases, and as such they offer a much better level of protection. Modern cases are designed to absorb some of the impact of load-in/load-out handling, as well as, the bumps and vibrations (and sometimes load shifts) experienced in transit. Foam lining (or the cases with "impact absorbing" designs) offers an improved level of protection, and I believe it is well worth the cost especially if you have a kit with an expensive custom finish. Remember that some mounts and brackets require extra space when you are purchasing these kinds of cases. If possible, it is best to actually take your drums into a drum shop and see which styles of cases fit your kit's components best. One other cool thing, that may appeal to some drummers, is that molded cases are now available in a choice of colors. If you are touring with a major road act then you already know about the necessity of ATA cases if you want to still have an intact kit at the end of a tour.

In Summary If you care about your drums, then it is wise to select the proper level of protection you will need when transporting them. I can not stress this enough. Load-ins and load-outs are often the times when bumps, knocks, and utt-oohs happen. And equipment stacked in the back of a truck or trailer is certainly going to need adequate protection from the inevitable transit mishaps. I have seen drummers near tears, because they transported their beautiful drum kit without cases and somewhere in transit a piece of loose shifting banging gouging scratching hardware damaged some drums. There is nothing that saddens me as much as seeing what was once a beautiful drum kit absolutely trashed because the owner didn't "love it enough" to take care of it. But, hey, that's just my own very biased "drum loving" opinion. If you've purchased a good drum kit, then you've spent some considerable cash, so take care of it! Ken Sanders

About the Author

Ken Sanders uses ATA [Drum Cases](#) to protect his [Tama Drums](#). Ken is also an active [Drum Forum](#) member at Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

Source: <http://www.articlesoft.com>