

Checklist for Packaging and Shipping Infectious Substances

February 10, 2011

USDOT Regulation, 49CFR Part 173.196 has harmonized with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) Regulations for Category A, Infectious Substances (etiologic agents).

Per USPS Regulation, 39CFR Part 111, (DMM 601 Mailability Sections 10.7.4) **materials known or suspected to contain a Category A, Infectious Substance ARE NOT MAILABLE.**

Primary Receptacle

- A Division 6.2 packaging must meet the test standards of §178.609 and must be marked in conformance with §178.503. Division 6.2 packaging is triple packaging.
- A watertight and siftproof primary receptacle must be used.
- Specimen container must be sealed (it is recommended that sturdy tape or parafilm be used if vacutainer seal has been broken or if a screw cap tube is being used), watertight, and cushioned.

Secondary Container

- A watertight, leakproof and/or siftproof container must be used.
- Adequate absorbent material must be placed within the secondary container and around the primary receptacle in case of leakage. There must be enough absorbent material to absorb the entire contents specimen receptacle(s).
- Add additional cushioning material inside of secondary container to ensure the primary receptacle(s) does not break.
- An itemized list of contents and/or test requisition should be placed outside of the secondary container.

Outer Package

- The outer package must measure at least 100 mm (3.9 inches) at its smallest overall external dimension.
- The outer package of an infectious shipper must display the UN Specification Marking (For an example see 49 CFR §178.503).
- Complete the names, addresses, and phone numbers of the shipper and consignee. Addresses should be placed on the same side of package as the proper shipping name when package size is adequate.
- For air shipment, label "Person responsible for shipment: Name and phone number."
(Recommendation based on IATA Guidelines not necessary for USPS or DOT.)

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- Label with the proper shipping name, which includes the technical name in brackets, the UN identification number, and the Class 6 hazard label.
- Orientation arrows must be placed on opposing ends of the outer packaging.
- If the package contains dry ice, add to package:
 - Apply a Hazard Class 9 miscellaneous hazard label to the outer package
 - “Dry Ice” or Carbon dioxide, solid”
 - UN1845
 - Write on the “Dry Ice” or “Carbon dioxide, solid” label the net weight, in kgs, of dry ice in package. To convert lbs to kgs, divide the weight in lbs by 2 to reach the weight in kgs.
- Place completed shippers declaration in a mailing sleeve and attach to the outer package (some shippers already have the mailing sleeve attached).
- If total specimen quantity exceeds 50mL or 50g and transportation by air is expected, then the package must be shipped via cargo aircraft only. The appropriate notation should be made on the shipper’s declaration and a “Cargo Aircraft Only” label must be attached.

Overpack (Quantity Limit: IATA 4 liters/4 kg)—not allowed by USPS

- Label the overpack with the same markings as each enclosed individual outer package.
- Place “Cargo Aircraft Only” label on overpack if it is traveling by air and if required due to quantity of package contents.
- Place completed shippers declaration in the mailing sleeve.
- Overpacks must be labeled with the word “Overpack”.

*****Note: The primary receptacle or secondary packaging used for infectious substances must be capable of withstanding, without leakage, an internal pressure producing a pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa (0.95 bar, 14 psi) and must be capable of withstanding, without leakage, temperatures in the range of -40°F to +131° F. The secondary container must have the universal biohazard symbol on it or have a red cap to signify that it is a biohazard container. Proof that the specimen receptacles and containers comply with Federal Regulations must be maintained on file.**