

**Illinois Department of Public Health  
Division of Laboratories**

**Guidelines for Packaging and Shipping Biological Substances Category B**

The following guidelines were prepared to assist submitters shipping diagnostic specimens. *This information does not meet the training requirements as required by IATA 1.5 and DOT 49 CFR 172.700.*

**Items needed prior to shipping**

- Form (available from the commercial carrier, such as U.S. Postal Service express mail, FedEx, DHL, etc.)
- Triple package system as described below
- Absorbent material (cotton balls, paper towels, super absorbent packet)
- Biohazard label for secondary container (if not pre-printed on secondary container)
- Recipient's name and address
- Sender's name, address and phone number
- UN 3373 Biological Substance Category B label

**Triple Package System**

1. Water-tight primary container - 1L maximum volume per single primary container; 4L maximum volume per multiple containers (glass, metal or plastic).

Examples: Culture tube (*Reinforce screw caps with tape*)  
Vacutainer tube  
Plastic specimen container

2. Secondary container (labeled with a biohazard label)

For **solid specimens** (cultures, swabs, etc.)

Examples: Plastic container capable of being tightly sealed  
Sealable styrofoam container (1 inch thick minimum)  
Sealed plastic bag

For **liquid specimens** (blood, sputum, urine, etc.)

Example: 95 kPA bag (tightly sealed)

3. Sturdy Outer Packaging (one side must be a minimum of 4 inches).

**Acceptable outer packages**

Examples: Heavy corrugated fiberboard  
Wood, metal, rigid plastic, rigid cooler

**Unacceptable outer packages**

Examples: Styrofoam boxes, plastic bags, paper envelopes

**Packaging**

- Place enough absorbent material to absorb the entire contents between primary and secondary containers.
- Place labeled primary container (specimen) in biohazard labeled secondary container.
- If packaging multiple fragile specimens, wrap individually or separate to prevent contact.

(over)

- Place test requisition, which may serve as the itemized list of contents, between secondary and outer shipping container.
- If necessary, add cushioning material to the outer container to make the secondary container siftproof. Seal outer shipping container securely with tape.

### Outer Package Marking

- Label with exact copy of UN3373 Biological Substance Category B mark.



**BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE  
CATEGORY B**

- If using a copy, cover entire UN 3373 Biological Substance Category B label with clear tape.

### Return Address Label

- Name of person shipping the package, business address, and business phone number.

### Shipping

- Ship to the appropriate laboratory listed below.
- Keep records of item(s) shipped, laboratory shipped to, and date of shipment.
- **Shipping Papers - A shipper's Declaration of Dangerous Goods is NOT required.**

IDPH Laboratory  
P.O. Box 2797  
Carbondale, IL 62902  
Phone 618-457-5131  
Fax 618-457-6995

IDPH Laboratory  
2121 W. Taylor St.  
Chicago, IL 60612-7260  
Phone 312-793-4760  
Fax 312-793-1322

IDPH Laboratory  
825 N. Rutledge St.  
Springfield, IL 62702  
Phone 217-782-6562  
Fax 217-524-7924