

Packaging/Shipping Instructions for the Submission of Specimens to the CCWHC by courier/mail

Background:

While Transport Canada governs the transportation of dangerous goods, they mostly defer to international standards and regulations, especially for shipments sent via air. Those shipments being sent by air must conform to a stringent set of standards regulated by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Under the regulations currently in place the submission of specimens for diagnostic analysis to the CCWHC do not have to be shipped as a regulated dangerous good, unless shipped with dry ice or as a known infectious substance. **However, all shipments sent via air must either be sent as a dangerous good or must conform with the current IATA exemptions i.e. “exempt animal specimen” and meet minimum packaging instructions to ensure the safe handling and viability of submitted specimens and meet the liability requirements as stipulated in the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act and Regulations.**

Specimen Collection – Handling Instructions

Risks associated with the collection of specimens are low if reasonable sanitary precautions are taken. Persons collecting or handling animals or carcasses should avoid contact with blood or body fluids, and they are advised to avoid punctures or cuts from bills, claws, teeth or instruments during handling. Carcasses should be handled using an implement such as a small shovel or large tongs, or by hand only if disposable (vinyl, PVC, latex [if not allergic], nitrile or rubber) gloves are worn. Alternatively, carcasses may be placed in a heavy-duty puncture-resistant leak-proof plastic bag of appropriate size by inverting the bag over the gloved hand, then grasping the carcass through the bag, and wrapping the bag around the body without touching it. The bag should be thick enough to resist puncture by beaks, talons, claws, nails, etc., and of adequate size to fully contain the carcass, while permitting secure closure by knotted string, or by knotting the bag tightly on itself. It then should be placed inside a second leak-proof plastic bag, which is similarly sealed. Double-bagging prevents cross-contamination between carcasses and fluid leaks in shipping, and is required to conform with shipping regulations. Carcasses should be chilled, but not frozen, unless it will be impossible to get them to the lab within 24-36 hours (distance, weekend intervening), in which case they should be frozen. Carcasses not submitted should be double-bagged and placed in garbage destined for a landfill, or buried several feet deep where they will not be disturbed. Do not dispose of in a manner such that they could be handled again by someone. **People handling carcasses should wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water afterward.**

Packaging Requirements: (as adapted from IATA Packing Instruction 650)

Note: For a complete list of supplies required for submissions please see Annex A, below.

General Requirements

The packagings must be of good quality, strong enough to withstand the shocks and loadings normally encountered during transport. Packagings must be constructed and closed so as to prevent any loss of contents that might be caused under normal conditions of transport, by vibration, or by changes in temperature, humidity or pressure.

The packaging must consist of three components:

1. Primary Receptacle: For liquid substances this can be as simple as a vial or cryostat tube, as long as it is leak proof and does not contain more than 1 litre of fluid. For carcasses or animal parts this will constitute a leak proof plastic bag large enough to enclose the specimen and strong enough to resist punctures.
2. Secondary Packaging: Bagged specimens should be wrapped in newspaper or similar absorbent material and placed in a second leak proof plastic bag which is then sealed.
3. Rigid outer packaging: The wrapped, bagged carcass should be placed in a hard-sided plastic insulated picnic cooler, additional newspaper or other absorbent material should be placed within the empty spaces of the cooler– **non-durable shipping containers such as Styrofoam or cardboard are not acceptable, they do not meet minimum requirements under current regulations, they do not properly ensure the viability of the specimen, nor protect against exposure to bodily fluids and potential pathogens in the event of a leak and finally they do not meet the prescribed due diligence standard required to avoid liability.** The cooler must be taped securely, preferably with duct or heavy duty packing tape to prevent leaks, breakage or opening during handling.

Specific Requirements:

If more than one specimen is being submitted, they should be double bagged separately and clearly labelled using a waterproof label and ink or pencil or on paper sealed inside a leak proof bag and enclosed with the specimen. Freezer packs, not loose ice should be used to keep the specimen cool or frozen.

Please complete a specimen submission form including dates and location where the animal was found, and as much information as possible about the circumstances surrounding the animal's death. A separate form should be filled out legibly for each carcass or group of carcasses of the same species, and it must accompany the shipment. The form, or forms, if more than one carcass or species is being submitted, should be enclosed in a Zip-Loc bag and placed in a clearly marked sealed envelope taped securely to the outside of the shipping container. **Do not enclose submission forms in bags with carcasses.**

Shipments should be marked as “exempt animal specimen” on the waybill.

Shipments should be made on Monday to Thursdays; **please do not ship specimens on Friday.** Please phone, FAX or email the waybill number to the appropriate CCWHC

regional lab the day the specimen is being shipped, this number can then be used for tracking purposes.

Please contact your local CCWHC regional office for a full list of instructions and appropriate submission forms:

- Quebec: please call 450-773-8521 ext 8346
- Atlantic region: please call 902-628-4314
- Ontario: please call 519-824-4120 ext 54662
- Western/Northern Region: please call 306-966-5815
- or phone **1-800-567-2033** to be directed to the appropriate regional site.
- Complete contact information can be found on our website at http://www.ccwhc.ca/contact_us.php

To download a regional submission form please visit our website at http://www.ccwhc.ca/wildlife_submission_forms_regions.php or visit our home page at <http://www.ccwhc.ca/index.php>

Annex A

Supplies Required For Submission of a Specimen

1. Canadian Cooperative Wildlife Health Centre Regional Submission Form, downloaded at: http://www.ccwhc.ca/wildlife_submission_forms_regions.php
2. Zip-Loc or other clear plastic bags of a size appropriate to enclose Regional Submission Forms
3. Heavy-duty plastic bags big enough to enclose the bird or mammal, and strong enough to resist puncture by bills, beaks, and claws; secure ties for same
4. Waterproof labels/tags, or small waterproof plastic bags (Zip-loc or Whirl-pac) in which to enclose labels/tags; waterproof marking instrument.
5. Frozen cold packs (**not wet ice**).
6. Newspaper and a larger leak-proof plastic bag (such as a heavy garbage bag) in which to wrap bagged specimens.
7. Insulated shipping container: hard-sided plastic picnic cooler with return address clearly marked. Do not use Styrofoam, cardboard or other non-durable shipping containers.
8. Heavy packing/shipping/duct tape.