

Packaging and transport guidelines

Samples sent by post must comply with the Health and Safety Executive – Transportation of Infectious Substances. This can be accessed via: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borne-viruses/transportation-of-infectious-substances.htm>

The following guidelines, in addition with Packing Instruction 650, should be followed to ensure sufficient packaging of Category B Infectious Substances for transportation.

There should be **AT LEAST** three layers to the packaging as follows:

1. Primary receptacle – sample tube or culture flask

- The specimen should be within a leak-proof primary receptacle
- The primary receptacle should be wrapped in absorbent material capable of absorbing the receptacle's entire contents in case of breakage
- The primary receptacle **MUST NOT** contain >1 litre of sample
- The primary receptacle should be capable of withstanding, (without leaking), an internal pressure of 95kPa (0.95 bar)

2. Secondary packaging – a sealed, plastic kangaroo bag

- The primary receptacle should be placed into a non-rigid, leak-proof secondary package
- The referral card should be placed in the external sleeve of the kangaroo bag so that it is separated from the primary receptacle to avoid contamination should the primary receptacle leak
- Multiple primary receptacles may be sent within a single package but each must be placed into its own secondary packaging in order to prevent contact between primary receptacles
- The secondary packaging should be capable of withstanding, (without leaking), an internal pressure of 95kPa (0.95 bar)

3. Outer packaging - a sample box with at least one surface with a minimum dimension of 100mm²

- The secondary packaging should be placed into rigid outer packaging
- Any remaining space between the secondary and outer packaging should be filled with suitable cushioning material in order to protect the primary receptacle from damage during transit
- The outer packaging **MUST NOT** contain >4 litres/kg
- The outer packaging **MUST** display:
 - A proper shipping name – BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE CATEGORY B
 - Package marking – UN3373 inside a square set at an angle of 45° (diamond-shaped) with each line being a minimum length of 50mm and a minimum thickness of 2mm with the lettering being a minimum height of 6mm
 - To and from labels
- The outer packaging should be securely closed with tape, catches etc.

Further details can be found via the following documents:

United Nations Economic Commission for Europe - General provisions and provisions concerning dangerous substances and articles. Accessed via <http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/danger/publi/adr/adr2009/English/Part2.pdf> (see section 2.2.62 Class 6.2 Infectious Substances)

Department for Transport – Transport of infectious substances. Accessed via <http://www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/Guidance-Document-Infectious-Substances-171012.pdf>

IATA Guidance Document – Infectious Substances. Accessed via <http://www.royalmail.com/sites/default/files/Guidance-Document-Infectious-Substances-171012.pdf>