

## **RABIES SPECIMENS SHIPPING and PACKING INSTRUCTIONS**

Revised February 2007

### **General Instructions:**

1. These instructions are for packaging and shipping rabies specimens by ground transportation (bus lines, USPS, and other "ground" couriers such as UPS). They were developed to comply with the recently revised regulations in 49 CFR parts 171 through 173.
2. As a result of the revisions to these regulations, rabies specimens can no longer be shipped as "diagnostic specimens." The new proper shipping name is "Biological Substance, Category B".
3. Specimens classified as Biological Substance, Category B are required to be triple-contained and to be shipped in a rigid outer packaging (fiberboard box) that is capable of withstanding being dropped from a height of 1.2 meters (4 feet).
4. It is a federal requirement that a shipper of Biological Substances, Category B be familiar with 49 CFR parts 171 through 179. These regulations are available online at the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration's website at <http://hazmat.dot.gov/>.
5. The DSHS Laboratory encourages submitters to ship rabies specimens on the bus. Packages are picked up from the bus station seven (7) days a week, every day except Christmas Day, and refrigerated upon arrival at the laboratory.
6. If you ship via overnight **air courier**, such as Federal Express, you must comply with the more stringent International Air Transportation Agency (IATA) regulations for Biological Substances. Contact your courier for appropriate packaging and labeling instructions if your package will be shipped by air.
7. Please do not ship a specimen to arrive on a weekend unless the courier will guarantee delivery on Saturday.
8. A completed Rabies Submission Form (G-9) must be completed for each rabies specimen submitted.

### **Specimen Preparation:**

1. Do not submit live animals.
2. Ship only the animal head unless you are submitting a bat or a very small rodent.
3. Have a qualified person separate the animal head from the body as soon as possible after death. Avoid damage to the brain, as it may compromise the test. If only the brain is submitted, the minimum tissue requirements for rabies testing are a **complete** transverse cross section of the **brain stem** and tissue from the cerebellum and/ or hippocampus.
4. Immediately chill the specimen(s) to between 32° and 45° F.
5. **DO NOT FREEZE!** Freezing may damage the brain tissue and can compromise the test.

### **Instructions for Packaging and Shipping Biological Substances, Category B:**

1. Place each specimen in double zip-lock or plastic bags. Seal each bag securely to prevent leakage.
2. Attach an identification number or name to the outside of each double-bagged specimen. This identification must match the information on the submission form. This is especially important if more than one specimen is sent in the same package.
3. Place the double zip-lock bag(s) or plastic bag(s) containing the specimen(s) inside an inner container, such as a Styrofoam box.
4. Use sufficient absorbent packing material, such as newspaper, to cushion the specimen(s) and to absorb any leaks. Styrofoam peanuts are not recommended.

5. Place enough gel packs or similar refrigerants in the inner container to ensure specimens are completely covered and will remain cold for at least 48 hours. **DO NOT USE DRY ICE!** Ice is not recommended. If ice must be used, double bag it and seal it securely to prevent leakage.
6. Close the inner container and place it inside the rigid outer container (cardboard box).
7. Place the completed Rabies Submission Form(s) (G-9) in a plastic zip-lock bag. Then place the plastic zip-lock bag on top of the closed inner container/box and close the outer container.
8. Secure the outer container with packing tape.
9. Ensure that a diamond-shaped UN-3373 label is on the exterior of the outer container near the "Biological Substance, Category B" statement in the "send to" address. The UN-3373 label must have a minimum dimension of 100 mm x 100 mm (3.9 inches).
10. Send specimen(s) to:

Texas Department of State Health Services  
 Laboratory Services Section  
 1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street, MC-1947  
 Austin, TX 78756-3199  
 ATTN: Letha Zuckero; Rabies Identification Team  
 512-458-7595  
**BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE, CATEGORY B**  
 REFRIGERATE ON ARRIVAL

11. Attach return address label to the top of the sealed outer container/cardboard box. *The return address label must include the name, address, and telephone number of a person knowledgeable about the shipment of the rabies specimen.* The package is ready to ship.
12. Call the toll-free Rabies Hotline at 1-800-252-8163 to alert Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Laboratory Services Section of the expected arrival time and to provide any other pertinent information regarding the shipment. **This is required by state law.**

**Special Instructions:**

Provide return postage, if return of the shipping container is desired.

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 For specific information on rabies testing, see the Laboratory Services Section Manual of Reference Services on our web site at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/lab/>.

For questions concerning testing of the specimen, call Letha Zuckero at 1-888 963-7111 x7595 or (512) 458-7595.  
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**Example:**

<p>Submitter Name          Submitter Address          Submitter City, State Zip code          Contact Person          Phone number</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Texas Department of State Health Services          Laboratory Services Section          1100 W. 49<sup>th</sup> Street, MC-1947          Austin, TX 78756-3199</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ATTN: Letha Zuckero; Rabies Identification Team          512-458-7595</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE, CATEGORY B</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">REFRIGERATE ON ARRIVAL</p>	
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