Transporting Biological Specimens

Contact EHS, EHS-hazmatshipping@austin.utexas.edu, PRIOR to transporting any materials.

A. Biological samples:
   i. Prepare for transport using the triple packaging method (figure 1).
   ii. Place samples into leak-proof primary containers (vials, tubes, etc.) with positive closure (screw-on, snap-on, or push-on) and properly labeled.
   iii. Lids/caps should be secured with tape or parafilm.
   iv. Containers/vials should then be placed into a leak-proof secondary container (plastic bag sealed with tape or in a sealable ziplock bag) with absorbent materials in sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents.
   v. Apply a biohazard label on the outside of the secondary container.
   vi. The samples should then be placed into an outer container (plastic or hard-walled) with a secure lid and wipe the outside container with appropriate disinfectant.

   ![Figure 1. Triple Packaging Method]

B. Dry Ice:
   i. Complete dry ice shipping (OH601) training.
   ii. The container (insulated chest) must be designed and constructed to permit the release of carbon dioxide gas in order to prevent a buildup of pressure that could rupture the container.
   iii. Only use a minimum amount of dry ice to keep the samples frozen.

C. Use of a personal vehicle is prohibited. UT-owned vehicles should be used for transporting hazardous materials (i.e. biological, chemical, sharps).
   i. DO NOT transport biological materials using public transportation (i.e. bus, taxi, etc.)
D. All hazardous materials should be secured in the trunk or the cargo area of the vehicle.

E. HAVE A DETAILED LIST OF WHAT IS BEING TRANSPORTED IN THE PACKAGING AVAILABLE ON YOUR PERSON.

F. Use cold packs or wet ice for temperature-sensitive samples for short-term transfers.
   i. If using wet ice double bag to prevent leakage.

G. If dry ice must be used and no trunk is available have the windows open/cracked (at all times while in transit) to allow fresh air into the car.
   i. Most vehicle air conditioning controls are equipped with a recirculation button (اظف) which recirculates air in the car and does not bring in fresh air. Ensure that this feature is turned off.

H. Biohazardous waste
   i. Needles shall not be bent or recapped after use and will be promptly disposed of into an approved rigid sharps container (figure 2).
   ii. All sharps Containers should be closed before transporting.
   iii. Containers must be placed in a leak-proof secondary container with sufficient absorbent material to absorb contents and prevent shifting during transport.
   iv. All sharps containers that become ¾ full will be submitted to EHS for disposal.

![Figure 2. Sharps containers](image)

I. Hazardous materials must be under direct control/secured and never left unattended while in transit. Secure the hazardous materials immediately once arriving at the usage or storage location.

J. Take care when moving the materials through public places or high-traffic areas.

K. Make sure to have a spill kit of gloves/cryo gloves, lab coat, eyewear, disinfectant, and absorbent material during transport to clean up any spills that may occur.

Contact EHS at (512) 471-3511 if assistance is needed or to report an injury.