



Safety Instruction

Shipping Preserved Specimens

Shipping Preserved Specimens (Non-Infectious) via IATA Special Provision A180

General

Ethanol and formalin are considered hazardous materials and bringing/shipping them on a plane without proper packaging and documentation breaks multiple federal laws and can incur severe civil and criminal liability. Follow these instructions to properly ship specimens preserved in these substances. The instructions below apply to **shipping non-infectious specimens**, such as specimens of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, insects and other invertebrates containing small quantities of preservative (formaldehyde solution, alcohol such as ETOH or isopropanol).

To ship hazardous materials, you have to CLASSIFY the material correctly, PACKAGE it properly, LABEL it properly, and DOCUMENT it correctly with the shipper.

Classification

If you decide to use ethanol or formalin to pickle or preserve your specimens in the field, then you'll have to ship your specimen's home using a carrier like FedEx. Formalin with less than 10% formaldehyde is not regulated. Specimens in ethanol can be shipped in small quantities under International Air Transport Association (IATA) Special Provision A180. Although there are a number of steps to follow, shipping under these exceptions is straightforward.



Packaging Samples

• Inner Packaging

- Specimens in plastic bags: Wrap prepared specimens in cheese cloth or paper towel. Place in a bag such that there is not more than 30ml of free liquid in the bag. Heat seal this bag.
- Specimens in sample tubes: place tissues in tubes with preservative, not exceeding 30ml preservative per vial. Place tubes in a plastic bag and heat seal.

• Outer Packaging

- Place the sample plastic bags in a larger plastic bag with enough absorbent material to soak up any free liquid that might spill. Heat seal this larger plastic bag.
- Place the large plastic bag(s) in a strong outer package with cushioning material, such that there is no more than 1L of liquid in this outer package.
- Seal up the box, putting a copy of any export/import permits inside the box.

In summary: the total quantity of preservative in the outer package must not exceed 1L, and total quantity in each inner package must not exceed 30mL.

Label

On outside of box, write: **“Scientific research specimens, not restricted, Special Provision A180 applies.”**

Document

On the waybill, check the dangerous goods option “Yes – Shipper’s declaration not required.” In the description-of-contents section, write “Scientific research specimens, not restricted, Special Provision A180 applies.” Place a copy of all your import/export permits in the plastic sleeve with the waybill.

For assistance with shipping preserved specimen, contact EH&S at 541-737-2273

Contact EHS:
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