

Ebola Specimen Handling, Packaging and Shipment Guidelines

California Department of Public Health

August 2014

CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT BEFORE SHIPPING SPECIMENS TO CDC

1. Carefully review the Interim CDC Guidelines for Laboratory Infection Control, Specimen Testing, and Transport (link below). These guidelines specify special precautions that should be taken for laboratories handling ANY specimens from persons with suspected Ebola virus infection, including those for non-Ebola virus testing (e.g., blood chemistry, urinalysis).

<http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/hcp/interim-guidance-specimen-collection-submission-patients-suspected-infection-ebola.html>

2. Fill out and include both CDC Specimen Submission Forms (2)

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncezid/dhcpp/vspb/pdf/specimen-submission.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/laboratory/specimen-submission/pdf/form-50-34.pdf>

3. Packaging and Shipping Clinical Specimens to CDC

a. Identify the Appropriate Shipping Category (Category A or B*)

Specimens for ruling out Ebola virus infection will likely fall under Category A, defined as:

Infectious substances that are capable of causing permanent disability, life threatening or fatal disease to humans or animals when exposure occur. In addition, the following criteria also support classifying specimens as Category A:

- Clinical and laboratory features strongly suggestive for Ebola virus infection, or
- Direct contact with a confirmed or symptomatic case, or
- Casual contact with a confirmed or symptomatic case.

There may be occasions when Category B, defined as an infectious substance that does not meet the criteria for Category A, is appropriate depending on available clinical data, and if Ebola virus infection is not the likely cause of disease. Submitters should consult with their local health department and CDPH in these situations.

*IATA Division 6.2, available at URL:

[https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dgr/Documents/DGR52_InfectiousSubstances\(DGR362\).pdf](https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dgr/Documents/DGR52_InfectiousSubstances(DGR362).pdf)

b. Specimen Packaging and Shipping

Specimens collected for EVD testing should be packaged and shipped without attempting to open collection tubes or aliquot specimens. Specimens for shipment should be packaged following the basic triple packaging system which consists of a primary receptacle (a sealable specimen bag) wrapped with absorbent material, secondary receptacle (watertight, leak-proof), and an outer shipping package (Appendix A).

Specimens should be sent by an overnight courier directly to CDC.

- Refrigerated specimens can be sent on 1-2 cold packs.
- Frozen specimens should be sent on dry ice.

The shipper must be trained and certified by the employer to package and ship in accordance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) and Federal Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations. Shippers can contact their local public health laboratories for packaging and shipping guidance if they are unfamiliar with IATA regulations and training.

The only available courier for shipping Category A and risk group 4 agents (require Biosafety Level 4 handling, such as Ebola virus) is World Courier:

(516) 354-2600 or (800) 221-6600 24/7 Availability

Ship directly to:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

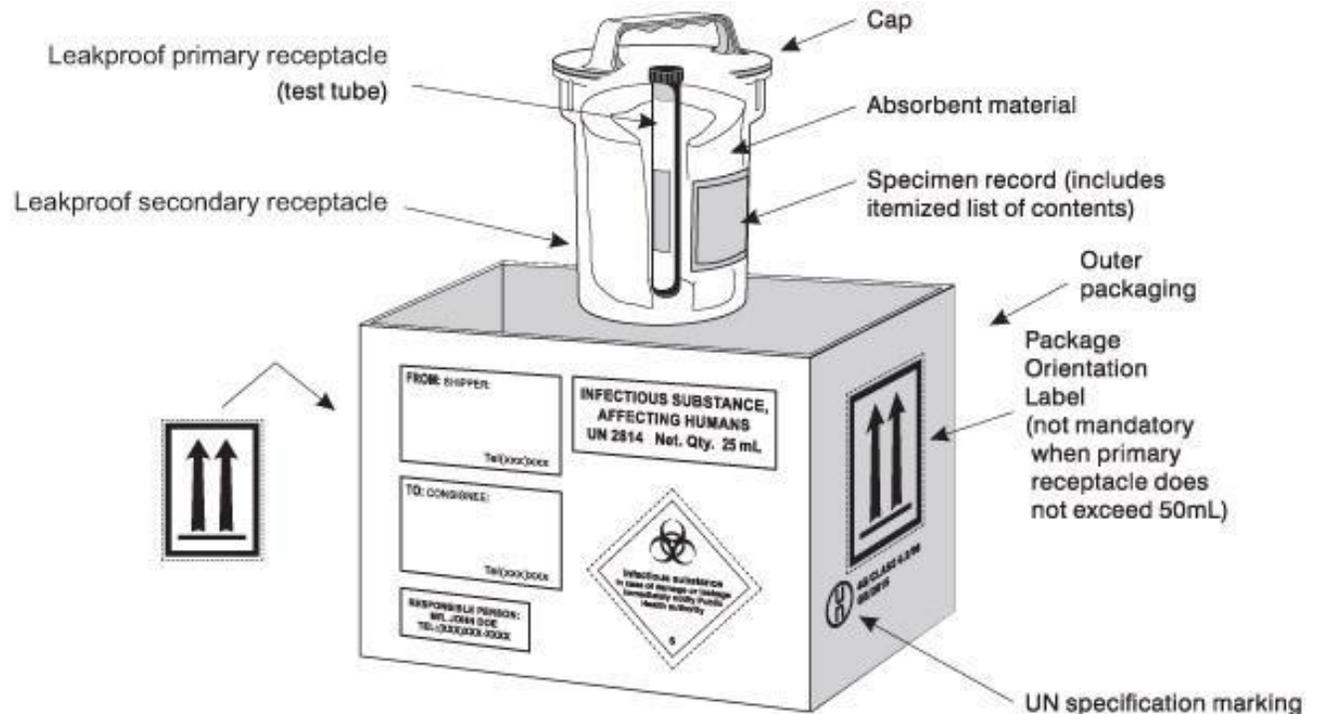
ATTN STAT LAB: VSPB, UNIT #70

1600 Clifton Road NE Atlanta, GA 30333

Phone 770-488-7100

- Hospitals must contact their local health department for notification and consultation for Ebola testing requests prior to sending specimens directly to CDC. The local health department will work with CDPH to assess whether testing for Ebola virus is indicated.
- No specimens will be accepted by CDC without prior consultation with CDPH.
- Email tracking number to CDPH at cder@cdph.ca.gov and EOEVENT246@CDC.GOV.
- Do not ship for weekend delivery unless instructed by CDC.

Appendix A. Example of Packing and Marking for Category A Infectious Substances



1. The smallest external dimension of the outer packaging must not be less than 100 mm;
2. The primary receptacle or the secondary packaging must be capable of withstanding, without leakage, an internal pressure producing a pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa.