

Rabies Packaging and Shipping

Environmental Health and Rabies Submitters / GPHL Virology Section / August 2024

Shipping Regulations

- All specimens must be packed and shipped in compliance with International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) and US Department of Transportation (DOT) Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, Parts 171-185.
- Personnel who handle, pack or ship hazardous materials (e.g., infectious substances) in commerce are considered hazardous material (hazmat) employees. All hazmat employees must be trained in their role, and most must be certified.
- APHL Packing and Shipping Training Job Aid is available [here](#)
- Submitters, please include a **specimen manifest** detailing contents of package. This is a Department of Transportation requirement for transport of dangerous goods UN3373 and will help with monitoring specimens when multiple specimens are included in the same box. It also provides an additional tracking mechanism.

Importance of Correct Packaging of Specimens

- Specimens submitted for rabies testing meet the Department of Transportation classification of Biological Substance, Category B. It is the submitter's responsibility to ensure that specimens are packaged according to DOT regulations to prevent leakage and to maintain refrigerated temperatures during transit.
- Leaking or inappropriately packaged specimens may result in exposure to anyone who handles the package; please ensure the safety of handlers by packaging rabies specimens responsibly.

Importance of Correct Packaging of Specimens

- Chill specimen prior to bagging and packing for hand delivery or shipping by overnight carrier. Specimens that have been bagged and packed for delivery while still warm may arrive in unsatisfactory condition for rabies testing due to autolysis.
- Properly package the (chilled) specimen by placing the severed animal head in heavy leak-proof, double plastic bag and secure the bag by twisting and knotting. For bats or similar size animals, do not remove the head, but submit whole inside a double plastic bag. For large animals or horned animals (e.g., cows, horses, goats) submit the BRAIN ONLY (consult the attending veterinarian).

Regulatory Packaging Requirements

- Brain only specimens should be packaged in a hard plastic container to preserve the integrity of the specimen.
- Place the plastic bags into a Styrofoam container with a cardboard exterior. Add cold packs, not wet ice, to keep animal head cold. **DO NOT USE DRY ICE!** Include leak-proof freezer packs in sufficient number to keep the specimen cold during transit. During the summer months particularly, samples may arrive at GPHL warm and in unsatisfactory condition for rabies testing.
- Fill remaining area with absorbent packing material to cushion the specimen(s) and to absorb any leaks. If specimens cannot be delivered to the laboratory immediately, refrigerate but **DO NOT FREEZE**. Frozen specimens cannot be tested until they thaw, which may cause a delay in reporting.

Packaging Labeling and Documentation

- Complete online with SENDSS and print the rabies submission form.
<https://sendss.state.ga.us/newsendss/index.html>
- Ensure that the point of contact name and number are provided on the form after you print. This contact must be available to receive telephone results from the GPLH Virology Unit.
- Multiple specimens in a box must each have a specific ID linking them to their paperwork.
- Seal the Styrofoam container.
- Place the completed submission form in the gold envelope, and tape to the outer lid of the Styrofoam container.
- Complete and itemized list of contents must be placed on the outside of the Styrofoam container.
- Place the Styrofoam container into the outer cardboard box.
- Secure the outer cardboard container with packing tape.

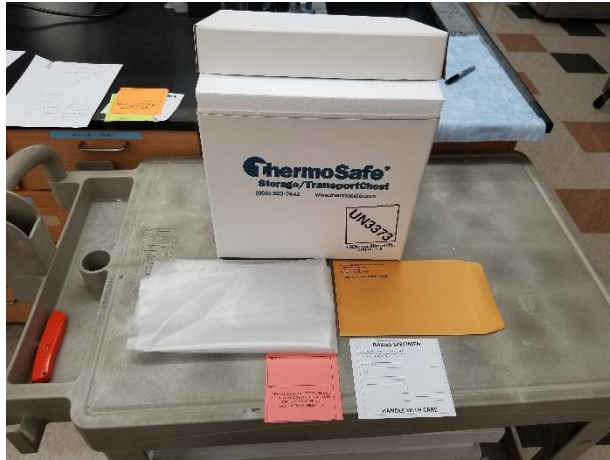
Labeling the Package for Transport

Attach the following labels to the outside of the package:

- Biological Substance, Category B / UN3373 label
- “RABIES SPECIMEN/HANDLE WITH CARE” label with the name and telephone number of someone who has knowledge of the package contents
- “OPEN BY VIROLOGY LAB ONLY!” label
- Return address/GPHL address label

Properly Prepared Shipper

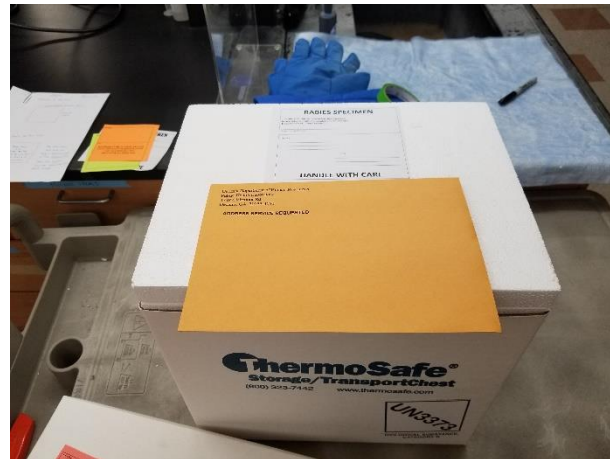
STEP 1.
Ensure you have supplies including triple packaging, order forms, a manifest, and shipping labels



Step 2
Place the head/specimen in double plastic bag and secure the bags by knotting them. Place inside the Styrofoam with cold packs and absorbent



Step 3.
Seal the lid on the Styrofoam box and place the rabies forms in the gold envelope and place on top of the Styrofoam box along with the manifest. Place Styrofoam box in outer cardboard box.



Step 4.
Seal the outer box and label with appropriate labels including UN3373, contact information and addressee information.



Shipper Labels

Decatur Facility

FROM:
TO: GEORGIA PUBLIC HEALTH LAB ATTN: VIROLOGY/RABIES SECTION 1749 CLAIRMONT RD DECATUR GA 30033-4050

Waycross Facility

FROM:
TO: GEORGIA PUBLIC HEALTH LAB ATTN: VIROLOGY/RABIES SECTION 1751 GUS KARLE PKWY WAYCROSS GEORGIA 31503

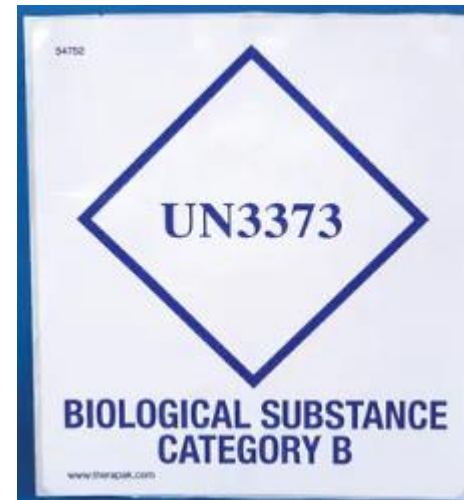
Shipper Labels

RABIES SPECIMEN	
I certify that this shipment has been packed in accordance with the regulations of Georgia Department of Public Health.	
_____ Signature of Shipper	
From:	

To:	

HANDLE WITH CARE	

**OPEN BY
VIROLOGY LAB
ONLY!**



Improperly Prepared Shipper

These are examples of how NOT to send a shipper for testing!

- No triple containment
- Multiple shipping labels (**strip all old labels off**)
- Shippers not properly labeled may accidentally be sent to the general accessioning area.



Transporting Specimens

Commercial Carriers (UPS; FedEx)

- Arrange transport of specimens for rabies diagnosis so that they are received at the GPLH in Decatur (1749 Clairmont Road, Decatur, Georgia 30033) or Waycross (1751 Gus Karle Pkwy, Waycross, Georgia 31503) within 24 hours.
- Check with your carrier to determine what service should be used to provide overnight delivery. Please use the courier service's quickest delivery.
- Specimens received before 10:30am Monday-Thursday and before 12:00 noon on Friday will be processed same day. Specimens received after those times will be processed by the next business day.
- **Note: Outer cardboard shipper is reusable and may be sent back to sender. Please do not discard!**

Transportation

Courier/Personal Transport

- Specimens must be appropriately packaged to prevent leakage and exposure of anyone handling the specimen, even when delivering the specimens personally or by courier.
- **Specimens from the areas north of Macon can be delivered to the GPHL in Decatur (1749 Clairmont Road, Decatur, Georgia 30033) from 8 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday.**
- **Specimens from the areas south of Macon can be delivered to the GPHL in Waycross (1751 Gus Karle Pkwy, Waycross, Georgia 31503) from 8 AM – 5 PM, Monday – Friday.**
- Specimens should be delivered via the loading dock door in the back of the facility.
- To deliver emergency specimens to the GPHL outside the above hours, please call Epidemiology who will facilitate delivery to the GPHL and contact the appropriate laboratory personnel. **Weekend on call testing is case by case with strictly enforced prior approval required.**



Contact Information

Jason Harrison

Med/Clinical Specialist Supervisor
Virology Unit
Georgia Public Health Laboratory/Decatur
1749 Clairmont Rd. Decatur, GA 30033
PHONE 404-327-7982
Jason.Harrison@dph.ga.gov

Rachelle M. Smith

Georgia Public Health Laboratory/Decatur
1749 Clairmont Road
Decatur, Ga 30033-4050
Office: 404-327-7980
FAX: 770-357-5080
Rachelle.Smith@dph.ga.gov

Kelly Walker

Georgia Public Health Laboratory/Waycross
1751 Gus Karle Parkway
Waycross, Ga 31501
Office: 912-338-7050
Fax: 912-338-7061
Kelly.Walker@dph.ga.gov

Skyler Brennan, MPH

Zoonotic Disease Epidemiologist
Acute Disease Epidemiology Section
Georgia Department of Public Health
200 Piedmont Ave, SE West Tower, Suite 1002
Atlanta, GA 30334
Phone: 470-755-8921
Skyler.Brennan@dph.ga.gov

Tim Callahan, MPH

Evaluation & Support Program Director
Environmental Health Section
200 Piedmont Avenue SE
East Tower, Suite 486
Atlanta, GA 30334
Phone: 404-345-1257
Tim.Callahan@dph.ga.gov

Impact

Improperly packaged specimens may:

- Result in civil/criminal penalties (DOT)
- Pose risk of exposure
- Delay testing



shutterstock · 157639859

