

PACKAGING OF INFECTIOUS MATERIAL FOR SHIPMENT OFF SITE

Training is provided for those who pack infectious materials for shipment off-site. We use the [Saf-T-Pak](#) online course. Shipments of infectious materials must always be checked before despatch by a trained person who has completed the course. Training can be arranged through the University Safety Adviser.

There are strict regulations covering the packaging and transport of hazardous materials by road, rail, air and sea. The scope of the regulations includes the transport of infectious materials. These are defined as materials which contain or are reasonably expected to contain, pathogens.

For transport purposes infectious materials are placed in one of two categories, Category A or Category B.

Category A infectious materials are those which can cause serious disease or death. They are mainly Hazard Groups 3 and 4 pathogens plus Clostridium botulinum and Poliovirus from Hazard Group 2.

Category B infectious materials are those which are not included in Category A. They include all Hazard Group 2 pathogens (apart from the above exceptions) and Activity Class 2 genetically modified microorganisms.

1) Triple layer packaging

Category B materials must, by law, be packed for transport using a triple layer system consisting of

- a primary receptacle;
- a secondary packaging; and
- rigid outer packaging.

2) Labels and paperwork

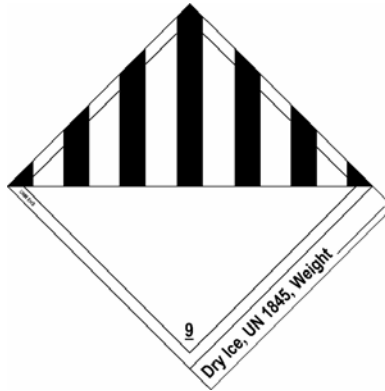
The mark illustrated below should be displayed on the external surface of the outer packaging



In addition, the words "BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE, CATEGORY B" should be displayed next to the diamond.

3) Dry ice

Dry ice, if required, should be placed between the secondary and outer packaging. Dry ice must not be placed inside either the primary or secondary receptacle because of the risk of explosion and the outer packaging must be designed to release carbon dioxide. Interior supports shall be provided to secure the secondary packaging in the original position after the dry ice has dissipated. The hazard label appropriate for dry ice with the reference UN 1845 must be displayed on the outer packaging (see below for an example) along with text stating that the package contains dry ice and giving the net weight of the dry ice.



4) Consignee to confirm that necessary consents have been obtained

Finally, before despatching the package, check that the consignee is ready to receive it. In addition for UK shipments, you should obtain written confirmation from the consignee (an email will be sufficient) that his/her institution has in place necessary consents from the Health and Safety Executive to allow it to store and work with the material. (For example, consents for Hazard Group 2 work or Activity Class 2 consent for work with the GM microorganisms which you will be sending.) There have been a number of incidents recently in the UK where researchers at institutions have sent strains to other institutions which did not have the necessary consents in place to allow them to receive them. The Health and Safety Executive has been investigating and has been looking at the roles of both the consignor and consignee in these incidents.

HOWEVER, THE KEY POINT TO REMEMBER IS THAT THE PERSON CHECKING THE PACKAGE BEFORE DESPATCH MUST HAVE COMPLETED THE ONLINE SAF-T-PAK TRAINING COURSE.