

## TRANSPORT OF DIAGNOSTIC SPECIMENS AND INFECTIOUS SUBSTANCES

Diagnostic specimens or reference isolates sent to the Laboratory for diagnosis or investigation must be packaged in compliance with the regulations defined under the Canadian *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act* and *Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regulations* (TDGR), including the most recent Clear Language Amendments and subsequent updates or amendments (refer to website link: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/TDG/menu.htm>). Transport Canada also endorses the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Technical Instructions and the Dangerous Goods Regulations published annually by the International Air Transport Association (IATA DGR). For air transport, both the ICAO/IATA and TDG regulations must be followed. Persons packaging diagnostic specimens and infectious substances for transport must be trained and hold valid Transport of Dangerous Goods certificates.

### PACKAGING FOR TRANSPORT:

The packaging must include:

#### 1. Inner packaging (same for both Category A and B):

- A watertight primary container (e.g. vacutainer, screw-capped tube, specimen bottle) reinforced with parafilm around top to prevent leakage.
- A watertight secondary packaging (eg. Ziploc bag, Saf-T-Pak or other polypropylene container or metal container). Several tubes may be shipped together in a single secondary packaging but must be wrapped individually to prevent contact between them or placed into racks.
- An absorbent material (e.g. cotton batting, commercial absorbent) placed between the primary container and the secondary packaging. This material must be capable of absorbing the entire liquid contents of all primary containers.

#### 2. List of contents (same for Category A and B):

Enclose an itemized list of contents between the secondary packaging and the outer packaging (e.g. laboratory requisition or letter listing specimens etc). **NOTE: this list needs to be placed so that it is the first thing seen when package is opened.**

#### 3. Outer packaging:

- Diagnostic specimens shipped via ground transport – use a fiberboard container marked with TC125-1B or an 'equivalent' outer packaging (e.g. cooler, toolbox, unmarked fiberboard box). However, the packaging used must not allow the escape of its contents under normal condition of handling and transport.
- Diagnostic specimens shipped via air transport – use a fiberboard box marked with TC125-1B and follow [IATA packing instruction 650](#).
- Infectious substances shipped via ground or air – use a certified fiberboard container marked with TC125-1A and the approved UN marking. Shipping documents must comply with Transportation Canada regulations and/or [IATA Packing Instruction 620](#). Documents must accompany the package at all times.

Questions regarding any aspect of specimen transport may be directed to the Packing Area (Calgary) at 403-944-2583 or to the Distribution Centre (Edmonton) at 780-407-8971.