How to pack the specimens

- Packing/unpacking of infectious specimens (blood, urine, respiratory secretions, unfixed tissue) must proceed inside a certified Biosafety Cabinet.
- Wear appropriate PPE for preparation and transport inside the laboratory (lab coat, gloves, eye protection).
- Place materials in a leak-proof container that can be sealed.
- Close the primary container with a tightly fitted cap or lid, seal it with Parafilm™ or laboratory tape.
- Label the primary container.
- Wrap each primary sample tube with enough absorbent material to absorb all of the liquid from the samples.
- Place the primary samples in the secondary container and label it with a biohazard symbol.
- Suitable secondary containers can include a plastic specimen bag with a zip closure or plastic container with a fitted lid.
- Decontaminate the outside of the secondary container using a disinfectant wipe before leaving the laboratory.
- Place the secondary container into a plastic bag.

What if the samples must be kept cold or frozen?

- Use cold packs or wet ice for temperature control during short-term transfers. Place wet ice in a sealed plastic bag or leak-proof container to prevent water leakage.
- Use special diagnostic shipping containers for frozen samples to maintain low temperature without the use of dry ice. If dry ice must be used, place it in an insulated, gas-venting container.

How to transport inside or between buildings on campus

- Follow the packing instructions described above.
- Use a cart or a courier tote when moving between buildings.
- Do not wear laboratory PPE through the public locations while transporting the specimens. Bring additional PPE with you on the cart, if needed.
- Use freight elevators, if possible.

What are the requirements to transport off campus in a private or university vehicle?

- If using a university vehicle, personnel transporting the materials must be authorized to use university vehicles and carry a valid driver’s license.
- If transported by private vehicle, the vehicle used must be for direct and exclusive transport of the sample to the destination (no other stops permitted).
- Proper containment and packaging must be used (see packaging requirements above).
- Do not transport biological materials by public tram, shuttle, or taxi between campuses or on public roads.

Note: Laboratories receiving COVID-19 materials must have prior approval from their School or Division and the Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC) for the transfer, storage and work with these materials.

Shipment of Biological Materials and/or Dry Ice Training (BHS) is required for those who package materials for shipment and transportation to off campus locations.

- Register for BHS: https://ehs.usc.edu/training/registration/
- Contact USC Biosafety: biosafety@usc.edu

Resources

CDC’s Interim Laboratory Biosafety Guidelines. Specimen Packing and Shipping - http://tiny.cc/cdc-bio-specimenpack
49 CFR Parts 171-180 Hazardous Materials Regulations 171.1 (d), Ground transport of hazardous materials https://ecfr.io/Title-49/pt49.2.171