

**T**ransfer of biological materials between institutions, collaborators, and from commercial vendors may require shipping permits, material transfer agreements (MTA's), or other required documentation to ensure the destination laboratory has the facilities, biosafety measures, personnel training, and approvals to ship and receive certain biological materials.

## ARE PERMITS REQUIRED FOR IMPORT/EXPORT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS?

Yes. Certain permits may be required when shipping biological materials to or from USC laboratories. They are:

- CDC import permit (no fee) for biomaterials regulated by the CDC's [Import Permit Program \(IPP\)](#):
  - Any agent infectious to humans
  - Any arthropod, other animal host, or vector of human disease
  - Any exotic living arthropod or other animal capable of being a host or vector of human disease
  - Unsterilized human or animal specimens containing an infectious or etiologic agent. Specimens could include blood, bodily fluids or discharges, secretions, or excretions that could contain an infectious agent.

The CDC provides a [guidance document](#) for completing the permit application. Materials not covered under the CDC import permit will need a certification statement declaring that the material is not known or suspected to contain an infectious biological agent.

- [USDA/APHIS](#) permit (fee-based):
  - Transfer/ship biological materials that may impact domestic agriculture and livestock.

Both USDA and CDC may require inspection of the PI's lab(s) to ensure biosafety measures are in place prior to permit approval. If an inspection is required, contact [biosafety@usc.edu](mailto:biosafety@usc.edu) or (323) 442-2200.

## WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR EXPORT OF BIOMATERIALS?

- A permit for export of infectious materials that are etiologic agents of human, plant, and animal diseases. The permit is issued by the [United States Bureau of Industry and Security](#).



## What I need to do...

- Prior to shipment, notify EH&S Biosafety for training, information, or assistance.
- Ensure that transfers of biological materials have all necessary permit applications, Biosafety approval, and other paperwork as required.
- Complete an MTA for institutional transfer of my intellectual property (e.g., research materials, cell lines, cultures, bacteria, recombinant DNA or similar items).
- Obtain certified shipping training for designated personnel through EH&S Biosafety prior to shipping materials.
- Contact [biosafety@usc.edu](mailto:biosafety@usc.edu) or (323) 442-2200 if I have any questions.

- A Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) to protect intellectual property, limit liability, and ensure credit to the developer of the materials. An online MTA application is available at the USC Stevens Center website (<https://stevens.usc.edu/researchers/mta-cda/>).
- A *pro forma* invoice (see Reference) for international shipments of non-sale items or items of minimal value.
- Completed paperwork required by USC-approved commercial transport vendors. Contact [biosafety@usc.edu](mailto:biosafety@usc.edu) for assistance.

## REFERENCES

CDC *Guidance Document for Completing the Application for Permit to Import Biological Agents into the United States*  
[https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/ipp/forms/guidance\\_document\\_for\\_completion\\_agents.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/ipp/forms/guidance_document_for_completion_agents.pdf)

*Pro forma* invoices

<https://www.export.gov/article?id=Quotations-and-Pro-Forma-Invoices>  
<https://dhlguide.co.uk/going-global/pro-forma-invoices/>