



Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory

1174 Snowy Range Rd
Laramie, WY 82070
Phone: 307-766-9925
Toll Free: 1-800-442-8331
Fax: 307-721-2051
Email: vetrec@uwyo.edu

Title Packing, Shipping & Mailing Biological Samples

Packaging:

Primary Packaging: We recommend you use Whirl-pak bags. These are the least likely to leak in transit. Do not use zip-lock bags as primary packaging. Place specimen in bag, add formalin if needed, and collapse the bag to expel air. Hold the yellow tabs of the whirl-pak bag, whirl the bag four or more times, and fold the tabs. Bag fresh tissues separately from fixed tissues. Do not fill whirl-pak bags more than half full with formalin fixed tissues should be in a 10:1 ratio of formalin to tissue. Ensure each bag is labeled with owner's name, clinic or veterinarian's name, and type of sample.

If more than one surgical sample is removed from an animal, bag and label each separately.

Secondary Packaging: If you have multiple samples from individual animals, group them by putting them in biohazard bags provided along with our shipping cartons. If you prefer, use large zip-lock bags. This serves two purposes: it allows us to quickly find all samples from individual cases, and it minimizes the risks of leaks spreading and contaminating other specimens from other cases in the same box. We recommend you put fresh and fixed tissues in separate biohazard bags. No matter what you ship, always double bag it.

Shipping carcasses: Please do not ship carcasses weighing more than 10 kg (20 lbs) unless special circumstances are involved, such as an anesthetic death, malicious poisoning or litigation. Large carcasses (> 10 kg) quickly deplete the ice supply and will rot in transit. If you need to send a carcass that weighs more than 10 kg., contact the WSVL necropsy technician or a pathologists in advance. We will advise you whether to mail a large carcass, or to collect tissues at your clinic. If the problem does not involve limbs, you can reduce the costs of shipping larger carcasses by cutting off thoracic and pelvic limbs and shipping only the trunk, neck and head. If you are dealing with a major disease problem, the best way to get reliable information is for you or your client to drive to Laramie with one or more fresh and unopened carcasses for a complete necropsy. The carcasses should be



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representative of the problem and ideally in the early clinical stages of the disease. This is also the cheapest way to gather data for your client.

The shipping carton you use must be insulated and protected by an outer fiberboard box. WSVL shipping cartons have Styrofoam inner packs with lids. Insulation will cool samples in the summer and protects them from freezing in the winter. Fill any extra space around samples with newspaper or paper towels to absorb leaks. This prevents samples from damage in transit and provides insulation. Do not use packaging peanuts. These do not absorb leaks, will turn into mess when wet, and may lead to loss of smaller specimens in the box. Add frozen ice packs to the top of the package. Cold air settles, and cold air from an ice pack at the top of the container will protect samples. The time of year and length of time in transit are considerations when deciding how many ice packs are required. Please place a layer of newspaper or paper towels between ice packs and the top of the box to absorb moisture coming off of ice packs during shipment. Do not use ice-filled zip-lock bags as ice packs. Place the lid on the carton. Tape the lid shut on two sides only. Paperwork should be placed in a Whirl-pak bag to protect it from leaks. Place it between the insulated container and fiberboard box.

MAILING:

- Avoid shipping specimens over weekends; refrigerate but do not freeze specimens until Monday if needed
- One- to two-day shipping methods are best
- Ensure specimens are packaged to meet the requirements of the shipper and applicable federal or state laws
- We can assist with your packaging needs. For whirl-paks, formalin containers, forms and additional shipping information please call the necropsy department at the Wyoming State Veterinary Laboratory.