

# EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

US Fish and Wildlife Service  
National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory  
1490 East Main Street  
Ashland, OR 97520

## Introduction

The Mission of the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Laboratory) is to provide forensic support in wildlife investigations.

The purpose of this guide is to help you with proper, and safe evidence documentation, packaging and shipping procedures so that your evidence shipment meets:

- 1) U.S. Department of Transportation regulations
- 2) Laboratory requirements for analysis
- 3) Requirements for presentation in courts of law

## Good Communication

Call the Laboratory if you have any additional questions about how to best ship your evidence to the Lab. We are here to serve your needs.

Contact us at:           National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory  
                                  1490 East Main Street  
                                  Ashland, OR 97520  
                                  Phone: (541) 482-4191  
                                  Fax: (541) 482-4989  
                                  Email: [NFWFL\\_EVIDENCE@FWS.GOV](mailto:NFWFL_EVIDENCE@FWS.GOV)

\* \* \* \*

## **IMPORTANT NOTE on SHIPPING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requires that Anyone who ships hazardous materials be trained and tested. *49 CFR Subpart H, Parts 172-700-704*

Furthermore, Anyone who knowingly violates a requirement of the Federal hazardous material transportation law is liable to civil penalties which may include fines and imprisonment. *49 CFR Part 171.1 (g)*

The types of hazardous materials encountered in shipping evidence include, but are not limited to:

- Pesticides, poisons, and other chemicals (or items tainted with these chemicals)
- Live ammunition
- Biological materials known or suspected to be infected with disease (bush meat)
- Lithium batteries - if removed from devices and packaged separately
- Dry ice

### **USDOT Training and Testing is Required for Shipping Hazardous Materials**

#### **Infectious Disease**

Evidence items that are known to be infected with disease must be processed following the guidance found in Public Health regulations, 42 CFR Parts 70-75.

These items could include, but are not limited to:

- Bush meat - perishable carcasses or tissues from foreign sources
- Primate carcasses or tissues from ANY sources

\* \* \* \*

**Call the Laboratory Evidence Unit for questions and assistance with any evidence  
requiring special packaging and/or shipping  
541-482-4191**

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## 1. Safety

Keeping yourself, your co-workers, family, and everyone who comes into contact with the evidence safe during collection, packaging, shipping and receipt by the Laboratory should always be on your mind. Using proper Personal Protective Equipment where needed (latex or nitrile gloves, Tyvek coveralls and special footwear) and using good collection, packaging, cleanup, transport and storage methods will minimize the possibility that someone becomes ill or is injured.

## 2. Preparing for Court

The mindset before handling any evidence in an investigation should be that it will show up in court and be questioned as to its integrity. How each item of evidence is documented, collected, packaged, sealed, labeled, tagged, preserved, and shipped is vital to maintaining its usefulness in the investigation.

The goal of good evidence handling is to preserve the physical, chemical, biochemical, and legal integrity of the evidence so that . . .

- the analytical value of the evidence does not change;
- there is no cause for reasonable doubt about the stated chain of custody;
- the evidence is packaged and labeled in such a way as to keep everyone safe throughout the handling and shipping process.

To meet this goal, you need to be aware of how the Laboratory's Evidence Unit must receive the material so that your investigation proceeds optimally through the end of the forensic analysis.

When the evidence arrives at the Laboratory for analysis:

- All tags, chains, documents should be properly and legibly filled out with no erroneous information.
- All evidence is account for – submission documents and the chain of custodies correspond to all items that were shipped.
- All evidence is properly sealed.
- All packaging is intact (i.e., no tears or holes in packages that can result in leaking, cross contamination or loss of evidence).
- All fragile evidence has been wrapped to prevent breakage.
- Latent print evidence has been handled and packaged properly to prevent damage.
- There are no noxious odors escaping from packages.
- All digital evidence has been packaged to preserve the data.

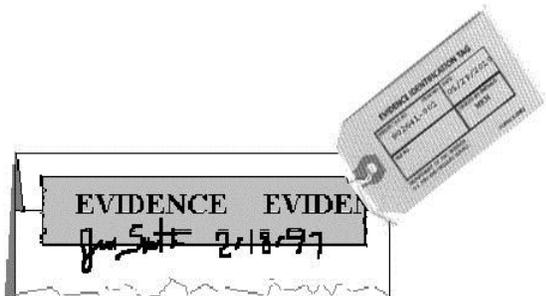
- All hazardous evidence has been packaged following the USDOT regulations so that there is no illness, injury, or death to anyone handling the package.

## 2a. Sealing and Tagging Evidence

All evidence sent to the Laboratory must be properly sealed in a container so that the contents cannot be switched, altered, contaminated or damaged without detection. The seal includes taping all container openings with “evidence tape” and placing your initials and the date across the margin of the tape and the container.

*Preserving Seals* An important aspect of sealing evidence is to preserve, where possible, each seal that has been placed on the evidence packaging. A sealed package should be opened in another location to preserve the original seal. Each subsequent opening should be in a new location. Each person who opens the package will be the same person resealing the package unless they have transferred that requirement to someone else as recorded on the chain of custody.

All Seizure and Evidence tags should be attached to the outside of each sealed package- not inside a sealed package and comingling with the evidence.



- Package is sealed with Evidence Tape.
- Your initials and date across tape margin.
- Completed tag attached to outside.

## 2b. Chain of Custody

One of the most important documents for the courtroom presentation of evidence is a complete chain of custody. The chain of custody, either represented as a tag on the evidence or a page which follows the evidence, is used as ...

- A means of documenting the chronological history of an item (or items) of physical evidence from initial collection to final disposition.
- A means of documenting all people by signature and date who have had the evidence in their possession since it was collected.

- A means of providing a receipt (a Xeroxed copy of the filled-out form) to the person transferring custody of the evidence to another person. Note: the original form always goes with the evidence.

### 3. Packaging Materials

Maintaining the integrity of your evidence includes using good quality packaging. The Laboratory will supply some packaging materials in the form of kits for certain types of evidence such as caviar, pesticides, tissue preservation collection and carcass odor control. Call the Evidence Unit of the Laboratory if you have questions or are in need of any of these kits.

Some containers you will need to fabricate yourself to hold items, such as latent print evidence steady and in place, so that its integrity is maintained.

Primary Containers (containers that the evidence is placed into first) should be new, clean, unused and undamaged boxes, bags, plastic bottles, metal containers, etc., that can completely contain the evidence and allow for proper sealing. Of course, hard-shelled plastic or metal gun cases don't have to be new, but all hinges and closure hasps need to function properly. Primary containers must remain intact and not allow leaking of the contents.

Secondary Containers (containers that primary-packaged evidence is placed into next) can be new or used boxes, bags, plastic bottles, metal containers, etc., but still must be clean and undamaged.

Outer Containers (containers to which shipping labels are affixed) can also be either new or used sturdy and intact cardboard, plastic or metal, but still must be clean and undamaged. Coolers used in shipping perishable evidence, carcasses, etc., must be undamaged with all hinges and closure hasps functioning properly. There must be NO written indication on the outer container that it contains evidence.

DO NOT use Styrofoam as a primary, secondary or outer container as they always break open during shipping.

Bubble Wrap and Padding should be used for fragile evidence to protect from breakage. Padding should also be used on evidence with sharp edges, points or blades such as arrowheads and knives, or sharp claws, talons, teeth, splintered bones or any other item which can cause injury when handled.

Freezer Pack Ice or Blue Ice can be new or used (but clean) and of adequate quantity to assist in preserving perishable evidence.

## 4. Documents Used in Submitting Evidence

Three documents are required in each submission of evidence to the Laboratory:

- Evidence Tags.
- Evidence Submittal Form.
- Chain of Custody.

Evidence Tags All evidence items need to be tagged with a completed white *Evidence Seizure Tag* (Form 3-487) or a blue *Evidence Identification Tag* (Form 3-2052).

Evidence Submittal Form The Lab's Evidence Submittal Form identifies important information about your submission. A PDF version of the form is available.

The submittal form should be filled out as completely as possible. The following information is required:

- Your case number.
- The name of the investigator requesting analysis.
- Your return address and phone number.
- An item-for-item list of the evidence being sent for examination.
- An item-for-item examination request.
- Special instructions regarding handling, return or forwarding of evidence.

Chain-of-Custody Form (Form 3-2063) A completed chain of custody is required for all evidence items submitted to the Laboratory. The white Evidence Seizure Tag can serve as a Chain of Custody for submitting evidence to the Laboratory but it is preferred that the 8.5 x 11 *Chain of Custody Form* (Form 3-2063) be used. A PDF version of the form is available.

## 5. General Guidance on Packaging and Shipping Non-Perishable Evidence

The following guidance outlines the general steps taken to document, package, and ship evidence to the Laboratory. See the specific requirement sections for guidance on unique evidence types.

1. Package each item of evidence in primary containers (bags, boxes, etc.).
2. Seal the evidence.
3. Attach completed and uniquely numbered Seizure Tags / Evidence Tags to each item.
4. Fill out the Evidence Submittal and Chain of Custody forms.
5. Place all sealed and tagged evidence items into a secondary container marked "EVIDENCE".
6. Place the completed Evidence Submittal Form, *signed* Chain of Custody Form and other paperwork in an envelope and attach to the outside of the secondary container.
7. Place the secondary container into an UNMARKED outer shipping container.
8. Draw a circled letter 'E' on the outside of each shipping package to alert the Laboratory that this parcel contains evidence. Do not affix evidence tape to the outer container.
9. Address all evidence shipping packages to:

ATTENTION: EVIDENCE UNIT  
USFWS/LE FORENSICS LABORATORY  
1490 EAST MAIN STREET  
ASHLAND, OR 97520

10. Ship via US Postal or with commercial carrier using traceable methods. For perishable evidence (carcasses and tissue samples), ship overnight on Mondays or Tuesdays so that the package arrives during the work week.

**A Note on Shipping Multiple Packages:** If your evidence submission consists of more than one package, indicate the total number of packages on your Evidence Submittal Form. In addition, mark the outside of the shipping packages 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3, etc. Place the original Evidence Submittal form and Chain of Custody in box 1 and a *copy* of the Evidence Submittal Form in the other boxes. This will assist the Evidence Unit staff in identifying shipping packages that arrive on different days.

## 6. Animal Carcasses and Odor Control

Carcasses require special packaging and labeling for shipment.

**\*\*\* ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY \*\*\***

### Notes on Carcasses

1. **Call the Pathology Section** of the Laboratory and discuss your submission if you have carcass evidence of the following types:
  - Carcasses that are suspected or known to be infected with disease
  - Carcasses which were used as pesticide baits.
  - Significant number of carcasses (20 or more).
  
2. **Freezing** All carcasses should be frozen soon after collection in the field. Large carcasses, such as wolves, should be packaged and frozen in the container you will use to ship it so that the evidence assumes the shape of the container. Otherwise, it may be difficult to package.
  
3. **Preserving Trace Evidence on Carcasses** Carcasses of wildlife found in the field may be submitted for more than just cause of death and species identification analysis. Trace fibers found in the hair coat of mammals or the plumage of birds may help point to individuals that came into contact with that animal before the agent arrived on the scene.
  - In order to preserve fibers on the body, the animal should be carefully placed in the plastic bag before removal from the crime scene and should stay in that bag through the remainder of the packaging and shipping process.
  - Solid items (such as traps and collars) found with the carcass may have fingerprint evidence on their surfaces. These items should be handled, packaged, and shipped with the care outlined in the section on Latent Print evidence.
  
4. **Pesticide-Laced Bait Carcasses** Carcasses used as bait that are laced with pesticides cannot be shipped to the Lab. Suspected pesticides on the carcass should be collected following the guidance under Pesticides, Poisons and Other Chemicals section below.
  
5. **Oiled birds** require special packaging in order to preserve the volatile chemicals within the feathers so that further testing can be performed. Instructions:
  - Oiled birds should be wrapped completely in aluminum foil.

- The foil-wrapped bird can then be placed in two more layers of plastic bags prior to shipping.
6. **Padding Sharp Edges** To prevent tearing of evidence bags leading to cross contamination of samples and possible injury to evidence handlers, use padding to cover beaks, talons, claws, teeth, broken bones, etc., of carcasses, especially where pesticide death is suspected.
  7. **Hard-Shelled Insulated Coolers** The outer package must be a clean, undamaged, hard-shelled insulated cooler (plastic or metal) with working hinges.
  8. **“Exempt Biological Specimen” Labeling** In addition to a circled letter ‘E’, packages with carcasses need to be labeled with an “Exempt Biological Specimen” label for shipping.
  9. **Ship Overnight on Mondays or Tuesdays** To be sure packages arrive during the week.
  10. **Leaks and Odors** To meet U.S. DOT requirements for shipping, it is essential that packages DO NOT have any leaks or odors.

If the package leaks or has a noxious odor which causes a hazardous condition for pilots and ground transportation, the USDOT WILL INVESTIGATE.

11. **Paperwork** All Seizure tags/Evidence tags need to be outside the primary packaging of the animal, preferably outside the second or third sealed package. The Submittal form and Chain of Custody should be in an envelope and then in a ziplock package taped to the lid of the cooler to protect them from any moisture.

## **Odor Control**

Under no circumstances should you ship a skunk to the Lab. No amount of special packaging can hide skunk odor. Significant problems may occur if officers ship skunks by air.

Carcasses that DO NOT have any odors should be triple-wrapped in thick, heavy duty plastic bags and sealed tightly to prevent any leaks.

U.S. DOT requires that packages being shipped exhibit NO noxious odors. Special, odor-control kits are provided by the Laboratory and are available on request. These kits include:

- Saranex odor barrier bag
- Heavy-duty plastic bag
- Odor-absorbing carbon cloth bag

- Vinyl body bag
- Carbon filter
- Roll of duct tape and zip ties
- “Exempt Biological Specimen” shipping label

**Odor Packaging Instructions:**

1. Place carcass into the Saranex bag first then the heavy duty plastic bag; wrapping each bag tightly with duct tape to remove air pockets from between the carcass and the bags
2. Zip-tie the ends on each bag.
3. Place an Evidence Seal on the plastic bag.
4. Attach completed Evidence Seizure tag.



*Saranex bag*



*Heavy duty plastic bag with Evidence Seal*

5. Place carcass into the black carbon bag and zip tie the end; then into the vinyl body bag.



*Carbon cloth bag*



*Vinyl body bag*

**FOR CARCASSES THAT STILL EXHIBIT ODORS**

6. Place the carbon filter inside the vinyl body bag.



7. Add freezer-pack blue ice (no dry ice) where necessary; close and tape the lid with fiber-filled strapping or duct tape.
8. Attach the “Exempt Biological Specimen” label and ship overnight to the Lab.

## 7. Bush meat

“Bush meat” consists of partial carcasses or carcass parts that have been smoked prior to selling for food or talismans. Because bush meat items are crudely dried as a means of preservation, the tissues may still pose a potential health hazard. This is especially the case if there are indications that the tissues are of primate origin. Avoid contact with the tissues if they are, or appear, moldy or putrid.

**\*\*\* ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY \*\*\***

**Infectious Disease** Evidence items that are known to be infected with disease must be processed following the guidance found in Public Health regulations, 42 CFR Parts 70-75.

Furthermore, USDOT requires that Anyone who ships infectious materials be trained and tested. *49 CFR Subpart H, Parts 172-700-704*

Guidance on Handling Bush meat:

1. Call the Laboratory prior to shipping bush meat evidence to the Laboratory.
2. If guidance under 42 CFR Parts 70-75 is not required, follow the Animal Carcass and Odor Control guidelines for packaging and shipping to the Lab.
3. Write an “EE” on the outer packages of all bush meat evidence shipped to the Laboratory.

## 8. Evidence for DNA Analysis

Samples for DNA analysis may be obtained from a variety of sources – including fresh tissue, freezer meat, gut piles, blood (fresh or dried), feathers, bone, antler, horn, hair, cooked, canned or smoked meats, fresh tissue, and sometimes tissue or body fluids deposited on objects.....but it is the quality and quantity of DNA that will determine the success of the analysis.

**\*\*\* ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY \*\*\***

**DNA Evidence is Fragile** Exposure to moisture and exposure to sunlight (UV radiation) are the two primary conditions that lead to rapid degradation of DNA. Keeping that in mind, you will want to collect samples for analysis that will maximize your chance of obtaining the best information. Two things to remember are:

### 1A. If it's wet – freeze it.

#### **Collection and storage of fresh/ wet tissue or blood**

If you are sampling from a fresh carcass or gut pile, muscle tissue or organ tissue are the best sources for DNA. Package the sample in a plastic bag and freeze as soon as possible. Be sure to wrap perishable tissues in multiple bags to prevent leaking and cross-contamination. If it is not possible to freeze the sample, at least keep it cold, or use beaded desiccant. Desiccant sampling kits and instructions are available from the Lab.

If the material to be sampled is decomposed or degraded, but under moist conditions, store the sample in a plastic container or bag and freeze as soon as possible. Beaded desiccant is not optimal for degraded or compromised tissues.

Wet blood samples may be collected by swabbing the sample with a cotton swab or gauze pad. Do not use paper or woven cloth because the blood sample will disperse and it will be more difficult to obtain good quality DNA. Collect samples to minimize the chance of having the blood of more than one animal present on the swab or gauze. Do not use beaded desiccant for wet blood.

### 1B. If it's dry – keep it dry.

#### **Collection and storage of dried tissue or blood**

Dry blood samples are best kept dry – scrapings of the blood may be collected in paper, or the object with the dried blood may be submitted whole to the lab (when practical or if it is of manageable size). If the dried blood cannot be sampled dry, use a cotton swab

or gauze pad wetted with clean water (not saliva or pond/lake water), and collect a concentrated spot of the blood sample.

Dried material such as dried tissue, bones, feathers, etc. should be kept dry and stored in paper containers.

## 9. Caviar Evidence

Caviar collection requires the use of a special 'kit' provided by the Laboratory. Call the Laboratory if you are in need of a kit.

Each caviar collection kit contains:

- 1 Large Tube (50 mL volume)
- 1 Wooden Tongue Depressor
- 4 Latex Gloves (Powder Free)
- 1 Zip-Lock Plastic Bag

**How Much Caviar to Sample?** For caviar shipments comprised of 100-1000 tins (i.e., 50 gram, 113 gram, 500 gram or 1.8 kilogram weights), randomly identify 30 tins for sampling. If there are fewer than 30 tins in the shipment, sample every tin. With a permanent marking pen, label each tin to be sampled as well as the box/carton from which each tin is selected with the Seizure Tag # for the case and the Item # for the tin. Maintain selected caviar tins at a cool temperature and out of direct sunlight.

### **Caviar evidence collection instructions:**

- Open a collection kit and label the screw cap tube with the identifier corresponding to a labeled caviar tin. Record the identifier on the bag you received with the collection kit.
- Put on latex gloves, open the labeled caviar tin.
- Use the tongue depressor to transfer about a teaspoon of caviar (100 eggs) from the labeled tin into the labeled screw cap tube. Discard the tongue depressor.
- Close the tube securely and seal it in the labeled plastic bag. Close the caviar tin and return it to its original labeled box/carton. Discard the gloves.
- Repeat steps 1-4 as needed.

**DO NOT FREEZE!**

## 10. Bird Evidence

If the whole bird is available, ALWAYS SEND THE WHOLE BIRD. If a partial carcass (dry or wet) is available, SEND ALL OF THE AVAILABLE MATERIAL. The examiner will remove diagnostic feathers or parts, prepare them for identification, and return them with the remaining portions of your evidence.

**Dry, non-perishable material:** Follow the *General Guide to Packaging and Shipping Evidence*

**Frozen material and oil-soaked birds:** Package each bird separately, ideally in clear plastic, 'zip-lock' style bag. Review the specific points regarding shipping Animal Carcasses.

**Art-work:** Wrap flat items (fans, medicine wheels) in a plastic bag, tissue or other non-inked paper, and place in a box layered between styrofoam or foam peanuts. Large, flat crafted items should be placed on a sheet of cardboard and wrapped with plastic film. Items such as Kachina dolls should be cushioned in styrofoam or foam peanuts inside a sturdy box.

**Single or loose feathers:** Pack each item to be identified in labeled plastic bags. Take care that feathers will not be bent during packaging or shipping. If possible, mixed loose feathers should be sorted and packaged by type.

**Down/trace evidence:** Send the entire 'host' item (trap, stick, etc) or relevant part bearing the trace material to the Laboratory as a packaged evidence item. The examiner will examine the host item and remove the relevant material. NEVER collect or package trace feather evidence on adhesive tape.

## 11. Firearms

**NO LOADED FIREARMS** UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY LOADED FIREARMS BE SHIPPED TO THE LABORATORY! THIS MEANS BOTH THE CHAMBER AND MAGAZINE NEED TO BE CHECKED.

Note: be aware that ammunition in tubular magazines on some 22 rifles may hang up in the tube.

**BLACKPOWDER FIREARMS** ALWAYS CALL THE LAB BEFORE SUBMITTING BLACKPOWDER FIREARMS.

**LEAVE DETACHABLE MAGAZINES IN THE FIREARMS** Test fires without the magazines are not the same as with the magazines in place.

**LEAVE THE BOLTS IN BOLT ACTION RIFLES** If the bolt is put into the rifle case separately it can move around in transit and damage the stock or scope.

**FIREARM FUNCTION AND SAFETY** If you have any concerns about the function/safety of a firearm, be sure to call the Firearms Examiner and state those concerns on your Evidence Submittal Form.

### Collection Instructions:

- DO NOT ETCH OR CARVE YOUR INITIALS OR THE CASE NUMBER INTO THE STOCKS OR METAL OF FIREARMS. Record the serial number onto the Seizure Tag, Chain of Custody, and the Evidence Submittal Form.
- The firearm should be minimally handled to avoid loss or destruction of evidence. Do not allow objects to enter or contact the firearm's barrel, chamber or other operating surface.
- DO NOT TIE EVIDENCE TAGS AND SEIZURE TAGS THROUGH THE TRIGGER GUARD. The wire or string tags could cause a safety hazard and have to be removed before test-firing.
- It is recommended that investigators purchase a sturdy, cushioned-lined, hard plastic or metal gun case for shipping firearms. A locking case is preferred. **Ship the key separately.** Securely tape all clasps with packing tape to prevent accidental opening in transit. Do Not use a cardboard or styrofoam shipping box.
- Keep firearms at room temperature in dry conditions.

## 12. Expended Projectiles and Cartridge Casings

**Test Fired Cartridges** DO NOT PERSONALLY TEST FIRE A FIREARM AND COLLECT CARTRIDGE CASES, SHOT SHELLS, OR BULLETS FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES. Laboratory personnel will test fire all firearms. Some firearms may be unsafe to fire with modern ammunition and some ammunition is not suitable for comparisons. The laboratory will supply the test fire ammunition.

### **Protecting the Evidence**

- DO NOT USE PLIERS, FORCEPS, KNIVES, OR SCREWDRIVERS TO REMOVE BULLETS. Rifling marks on bullets are easily damaged by contact with tools.
- DO NOT MARK CARTRIDGE CASES OR BULLETS. Mark the outside of the envelope with the description and initials.
- DO NOT SEND WET OR DAMP CARTRIDGE CASES, SHOT SHELLS, OR EXPENDED BULLETS. If these items are recovered wet or damp, allow them to dry before packaging. A water wash (no rubbing or scrubbing!) to remove excess organic material is encouraged unless genetic examinations are to be performed on the organic material. In that case, allow the blood or tissue to air-dry and then package the items in paper wrap, not plastic, and ship following the general package/shipping guidelines. Be sure to indicate if the firearms evidence has blood/tissue or latent prints that require additional examination.
- If cartridge case evidence is being submitted for Latent Print analysis, REFER TO THE SPECIAL PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS FOR LATENT PRINT EVIDENCE.

Package dry cartridge cases, shot shells, and expended bullets, individually in paper envelopes. Wrap them in tissue or paper towels first- not cotton- to keep them secure. Do not use plastic bags or other containers which may permit the growth of bacteria which is potentially harmful to micro-striated detail on bullets or promote rusting on cartridge cases and shot shells.

Individually wrap or otherwise protect all cases, shells and discharged bullets to prevent rubbing and abrasion during transit. The outer shipping container must be strong enough to prevent compression damage to all items in transit.

### 13. Live Ammunition

**DO NOT SEND LIVE AMMUNITION TO THE LAB.**

**Live Ammunition must be shipped following U.S. Department of Transportation Regulations. YOU MUST BE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED FOLLOWING 49 CFR 172.704.**

CONTACT THE FIREARMS UNIT OF THE LABORATORY

If, after contacting the Firearms Unit of the Lab, you are asked to submit live ammunition, the following points apply:

- Live ammunition must be shipped by a commercial transporter which is authorized by the DOT to handle hazardous materials. Live ammunition cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.
- Live ammunition must be packaged according to Federal DOT 49 CFR 173.63(b) These regulations are limited to the following types of ammunition:
  - Ammunition for rifle or pistol not exceeding 50 caliber.
  - Ammunition for shotgun no larger than 8 gauge.
  - Ammunition with inert projectiles (blanks).
- Ammunition must be packed in inside boxes, or in partitions which fit snugly in the outside packaging, or in metal clips.
- Primers must be protected from accidental detonation.
- Inside boxes, partitions or metal clips must be packed in securely-closed strong outside packaging.

## 14. Pesticide Evidence

Pesticides and other chemicals must be shipped following U.S. Department of Transportation Regulations. YOU MUST BE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED FOLLOWING 49 CFR 172.704!

**\*\*\* ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY \*\*\***

**Pesticide Collection Kits** The Laboratory has special collection and packaging kits for shipping hazardous materials evidence to the Laboratory. These kits will allow you to prepare shipments of hazardous evidence in a manner which meets USDOT regulations. Call the Laboratory if you need a kit.

**Each kit contains:**

- (3) 15 ml polypropylene tubes
- (6) cotton-tipped applicators
- (1) padded envelope
- (1) 8 oz plastic container with screw cap lid
- (2) zip-lock bags
- (2) pair of latex gloves
- (1) DOT Exempted Quantities label

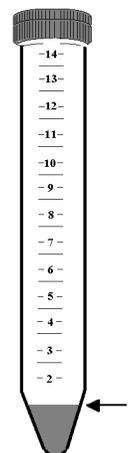


Suspected pesticides must be shipped by Federal Express, UPS or other company which is authorized by the DOT to ship hazardous materials. Suspected pesticides cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.

**Safety** Be extremely careful when handling any chemical. Use rubber gloves to protect your hands and be careful of your clothing, shoes, tools, etc. which could transfer to your vehicle, office and home.

**Collecting Pure Samples** Regarding Pure Samples – chemicals that come straight from a bottle or can:

1. Coat the two cotton-tipped applicators with sample (solid or liquid). USDOT regulation 49 CFR 173.4 (a)(1)(iii) allows you to place up to 1 gram or 1 milliliter of sample into the tube.
2. Leave the applicators in the tube and tightly secure the screw cap.
3. If possible, always collect three tubes from the same source.



4. Label the three tubes as one item on the evidence submittal form.

**Collecting Diluted Samples** - including solid samples such as distinctly visible granules, powders or pastes or liquid samples with a distinctive color/odor on bait carcasses (sheep, chickens, etc.) or in the soil, corn, seeds or other substrates.

1. USDOT allows you to fill the tube completely with dilute sample.
2. Tightly secure the screw cap.
3. If possible, always collect three tubes from the same source.
4. Label the three tubes as one item on the evidence submittal form.



For both pure and dilute 15 ml sample tubes, place all three tubes into the padded envelope and place the envelope into the larger round plastic container.





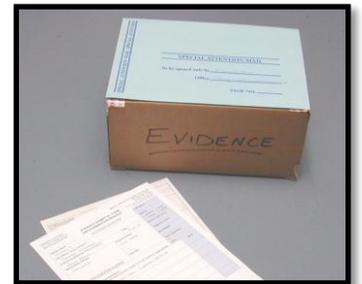
Place the plastic container into the two zip-lock bags, voiding all excess air and completely seal-locking each bag individually.

Attach all seizure tags, etc., to the top flap of the outer sealed plastic bag, taking care not to staple through the air-tight portion of the bag and thus compromise the sealing process.



Place all of your tagged evidence packages into a sturdy, corrugated cardboard shipping box marked "EVIDENCE" and seal with evidence tape.

Place the completed Evidence Submittal Form and Chain of Custody into an envelope and attach to the top of the sealed inner container.



Place the inner shipping container marked "EVIDENCE" into an OUTER shipping cardboard container.

Affix the DOT *Excepted Quantities* label to the outer shipping box.

*(Circle E inside the Red-Hashed Box)*



**Note:** If you are shipping hazardous samples with non-hazardous items in the same container, you must still place the hazardous evidence into sturdy, corrugated cardboard box first, and then place this box into another shipping container with the other evidence. The *DOT Excepted Quantities* label is then placed on the outermost container.

**Package Weight Limit:** If the complete evidence shipment with enclosed box containing the hazardous samples weighs more than 64 pounds, then you must ship the hazardous samples separately. (A shipping box that has a *DOT Excepted Quantities* label cannot weigh more than 64 pounds).

Ship via commercial carrier authorized by DOT to ship hazardous materials. Suspected pesticides cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.

## 15. Latent Print Evidence

To process items of evidence for latent prints, the evidence must be handled, preserved, packaged and shipped in a proper manner so that processing for 'friction ridge' evidence is possible. Failure to do so is likely to destroy any latent prints on the evidence items.

**Always** use gloves to pick up any type, porous or non-porous, friction ridge evidence items. Try to handle areas on the item not likely to have friction ridge deposits while being careful not to wipe or brush against the evidence item surfaces which are going to be processed.

General packaging and shipping instructions:

- Fasten the evidence items to a rigid surface or suspend the item inside a box with wire, zip-ties, or string to prevent shifting and contact with surfaces that will damage or eliminate friction ridge deposits. Note: friction ridge deposits are sensitive and they require appropriate steps to be taken to insure usefulness Place documents and other paper-evidence (porous evidence surfaces) in large sealed manila envelopes. **Do not** write on the envelope with evidence inside as this may damage the evidence item(s).
- Place any developed friction ridge tape lifts in sealed manila or mailing envelopes previously labeled with a ball point pen (do not use a felt pen). **Do not** write on the envelope with evidence inside as this may damage the evidence item(s).
- Keep all items separate from each other to minimize destruction or contamination of friction ridge detail.
- Place all separately packaged items into another inner shipping container labeled with the words "Latent Print Evidence."

Things to avoid while collecting, handling, packaging and shipping evidence items suspected of bearing friction ridge detail:

- DO NOT cover items to be examined for friction ridge detail with evidence tape or other material.
- DO NOT handle friction ridge detail evidence without clean plastic, latex, or cotton gloves.
- DO NOT package items suspected of having friction ridge detail evidence in cotton, cloth, Styrofoam peanuts, or any other packaging that might smudge, scuff, or wipe away the friction ridge detail.

**If you have ANY questions before, during, or after dealing with possible friction ridge evidence, PLEASE feel free to contact the Latent Print Examiner  
541-482-4191**

## 16. Digital Evidence

Digital Evidence (like most evidence submitted to the Forensic Lab) needs to be handled and packaged in a way to protect it from damage and alteration. The following guidelines should be followed when storing or packaging digital evidence. If you need packaging material for digital evidence, contact the Evidence control unit of the Lab.

### **General Guidelines:**

- Store the evidence in a cool dry area
- Keep the evidence away from magnets and devices that emit magnetic fields, as these can alter data.
- When re-packaging any evidence, maintain all material that was used in a past seals so that all seals that were used on the evidence can be reviewed in court.
- When dealing with devices impacted by moisture and static buildup avoid plastic bags. Antistatic bags, paper bags, and cardboard boxes are the preferred sealing containers for this type of evidence.

**Video and Audio Tapes:** Video and Audio Tapes should be sealed in a paper bag to prevent buildup of moisture. The bag should provide adequate padding to prevent damage to the tapes during shipping.

### **Regarding Media Cards/Thumb Drives:**

- A paper envelope work well for these devices. Antistatic bag with desiccant can also be used.
- The lab can provide protective cases for media cards if needed.

### **Regarding Computers:**

- Computers that arrive at the laboratory for imaging are usually handled on a priority basis so that they can be returned to the case agent quickly.
- Computers should be packaged for shipping with a minimum of 2" of padding on all sides.
  - This can be accomplished by using two layers of large bubble wrap.
  - Rigid foam designed to support a computer case can also be used if it will hold the computer firmly and not allow it to shift during transport.
  - Loose peanut packaging material should NOT be used because it can shift around and put the computer at risk.
  - When returning computers, the Lab will coordinate with the case agent to ensure that they are available to receive the shipment.

### **Regarding Hard Drives:**

- Protect hard disk drives from static electricity, humidity, shock or vibration, and extreme temperatures at all times.
- Place in an original shipping container for the hard drive. When this type of container is not available, use a padded antistatic bag with additional padding outside this bag giving 2" of padding on all sides (one inch of padding, or just an antistatic padded bag is not enough).
- If this antistatic bag is sealed, desiccant should be placed inside the bag to prevent moisture condensation.
- The outer seal should provide for ventilation. A paper bag or cardboard box makes a good outer seal for hard drives.

### **Regarding CDs/DVDs:**

- Place in sleeves to protect the recorded surface and pad them to prevent breakage.
- A 6" x 6" piece of heavy cardboard or foam board may be used.
- Rigid CD cases and cardboard sleeves can also be used.

### **Regarding Cell Phones, PDAs and GPS Units:**

- Seal the device inside a Faraday bag (such as a Paraben stronghold bag).
- Paraben stronghold bags have an inner Velcro pocket and an outer Velcro seal. Make sure the device is placed into the inner Velcro pocket and all Velcro is tightly sealed.
- Multiple layers of aluminum foil can also be used as a low cost and available alternative. Use a minimum of 3 layers of foil when using this method.
- Provide padding to the device prior to putting it inside a Paraben stronghold bag or foil to protect the device from scratches and reduce the risk of buttons being pushed.
- Evidence seal for these devices should be an appropriately sized box with padding (such as bubble wrap) for the device to prevent buttons on the device from being pressed.
- Power is now only needed on older devices. Most current devices can maintain their power for a long period of time.

### **Regarding Digital Cameras & Video Cameras:**

- Provide adequate padding to protect these devices during shipping.
- At least 2" of bubble wrap on all sides should be provided.

### **Regarding Batteries in cell phones, laptops, etc.:**

- Leave them in the device to ship easier. Batteries that have been removed from these devices require special USDOT packaging.