

# The University of the Incarnate Word

## Environmental Health Safety and Risk Management

### Transporting Biological Specimens

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#### Guidelines for transporting biological specimens (i.e. human/animal blood, body fluids, tissues):

- Specimen containers should be watertight and leak-proof.
- If the specimen container is a tube, ensure it is tightly capped and placed in a rack to maintain an upright position. The caps on tubes can be wrapped with parafilm to ensure that there is no leakage.
- Single tubes can be placed in a Ziploc bag with the biohazard label on the bag. Absorbent (paper towels, kimwipes, diaper pads, etc.) should be placed inside the bag or in the transport box.
- When transporting multiple primary containers, package them in a manner that will prevent damage to the containers. For example, if you are preparing to transport a number of vacutainers, place these in a rack or tube holder that will prevent contact between the tubes. If possible, place rack inside a large Ziploc bag.
- Place specimen containers and racks in robust, leak-proof plastic or metal transport boxes with secure, tight fitting covers. Triple packaging should be employed. For additional containment, the transport box, which may be a cooler, can be placed inside a Rubbermaid type box with lid. Place absorbent inside the Rubbermaid container.
- Label each transport box appropriately, consistent with its contents, a biohazard symbol (or biohazard symbol on Ziploc bag inside the transport box), the name and telephone number of an emergency contact person, and the receiver's name address and telephone number.
- Specimen data forms and identification data should accompany each transport box.
- Keep spill kits containing absorbent material, a chloride disinfectant, a leak-proof waste container and PPE (gloves) in the transport vehicle.
- Secure the transport boxes in the transport vehicle.
- Travel directly from the pick up location to the drop off point.
- During transport, vehicle should only be used for that purpose.

#### Receiving packages or specimens:

- Before opening a package, shipment should be examined for the following:
  - Proper paperwork and labeling
  - Package integrity (report any leaking packages to the sending dept. and the PI)
- Package Delivery: deliver package directly to the designated person
- Opening the package: Open package in lab with appropriate safety equipment (PPE and Biological Safety Cabinet)

***If you have any questions on the transporting of biological specimens, please contact the office of Environmental Health Safety and Risk Management at 210-829-6035 or 210-805-3068***