CDC AR LABORATORY NETWORK:
Guidance for Packing and Transportation of Cepheid Swabs by FedEx®

PURPOSE.

This guideline will aid in shipping specimens collected with Cepheid Swabs for colonization screening. Guidelines may vary from transporter to transporter; however, guidelines below are catered to FedEx requirements because CDC is using FedEx as the designated transporter for ARLN specimens.

Cepheid swab specimens fall under the International Air Transport Association’s (IATA) “Category B”. Category B is defined as “an infectious substance not in a form generally capable of causing permanent disability or life-threatening or fatal disease in otherwise healthy humans or animals when exposure to it occurs”\(^1\). The IATA guidelines require three receptacles to package and ship Category B substances that are highlighted in this guideline.

A special permit/certification is not required to ship a Category B substance; however, training is necessary to ensure proper packaging of shipments and to reduce risks of exposure during transportation. Training may be informal, consisting of a documented review of Category B shipping practices.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS.

- Please ensure that employees tasked with packing and/or shipping swabs are properly trained
- Employers/leadership must be responsible for training employees shipping Cepheid swabs
- Cepheid transport swabs can be stored up to 5 days at room temperature (15-28°C)
- Please be sure to ship swabs within 1 day of collection
- When possible, coordinate timing of colonization swabbing and specimen shipping with recipient regional laboratory’s testing schedule.
- Dry ice should not be used for swab shipment; cold packs may be considered if shipping temperatures are expected to exceed 28°C.
- Packages containing biohazards should **NEVER** be dropped off at a FedEx Express® Drop Box
- Guidelines detailed below are specific to FedEx requirements; guidelines may vary based on other transporters (e.g., UPS, USPS, etc.)
- More information on shipping Category B substances can be found reviewing [FedEx UN3373 Shipping Guidelines](#)

\(^1\) Definition derived from Transporting Infectious Substances Safely Department of Transportation.; 2006
PACKAGING THE SWAB.

1. Primary Receptacle
   - Primary receptacles must be plastic or glass containers
   - Specimens collected with Cepheid swabs are in an acceptable primary receptacle, as shown in photo below
   - The screw top on the swab must also be reinforced with adhesive tape or parafilm

   ![Acceptable packaging of swab in one bag](image)

2. Secondary Receptacle
   - Secondary receptacles must be watertight and leak-proof
   - Generally, sealed plastic bags are accepted as a secondary receptacle for Cepheid swabs
   - Place one transport tube into biohazard bag containing absorbent paper. Make sure the bag is fully sealed.
   - Do not overfill the bag with multiple swabs; the bag **MUST** be sealed completely, see photo below
   - Absorbent material such as cotton balls, paper towels, or absorbent pads should be placed in the bag with the swabs in case there is a leak

   ![Acceptable secondary receptacle](image)
3. **Sturdy Outer Packaging**
   - Once swabs are secured in a sealed plastic bag, they are to be placed into a box
   - FedEx shipping requires the outer packaging box be made of corrugated fiberboard or wood
   - Foam boxes, paper bags, and envelopes are **not** acceptable as an outer package for FedEx shipping of these specimen types
   - The box should be an appropriate size to encase the bag of swabs; not too big and not too small
   - An itemized list must be included with the shipment
   - The list must be placed between the secondary receptacle(s) and the outer package

**Acceptable Outer Packaging**

![Corrugated Fiberboard](image1)

![Wood](image2)

**Unacceptable Outer Packaging**

![Styrofoam Boxes](image3)

![Plastic Bags](image4)

![Paper Envelopes](image5)
SHIPPING THE CEPHEID SWABS.

1. Once swabs have been properly packaged, the outer packaging, or shipping box, must be labeled with:
   - UN 3373 label -- labels can be purchased from Fisher Scientific (catalog numbers 22-130-067 or 22-130-069, based on size requirements) or the “Appropriate Label” example below may be printed and adhered to the outer packaging with clear packing tape).
   - 6-mm-high text stating “Biological Substance, Category B” adjacent to the label UN 3373 shown below:
Example of an appropriate label

UN3373

BIOLOGICAL SUBSTANCE
CATEGORY B
2. The shipper’s and recipient’s name, address, and telephone number must be displayed clearly on the box.
3. Multiple bags of swabs can be placed in one box but the weight should not exceed 4kg.

CONTACT INFORMATION.
For questions or further information, please contact Dr. Allison Brown, acbrown1@cdc.gov or ARLN@cdc.gov.