



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



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



**Sealed
Plastic Bag**

Acceptable packaging of
swab in one bag



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



Wood

Unacceptable Outer Packaging



Styrofoam Boxes



Plastic Bags

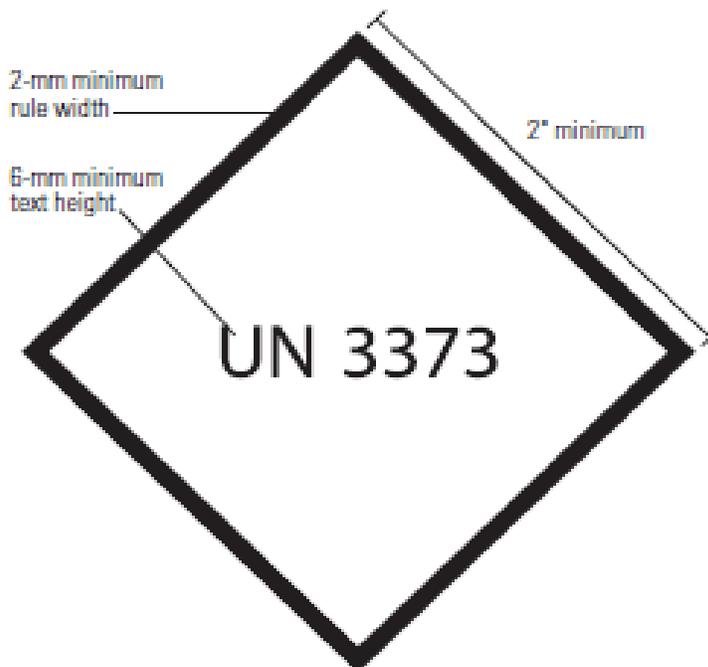


Paper Envelopes

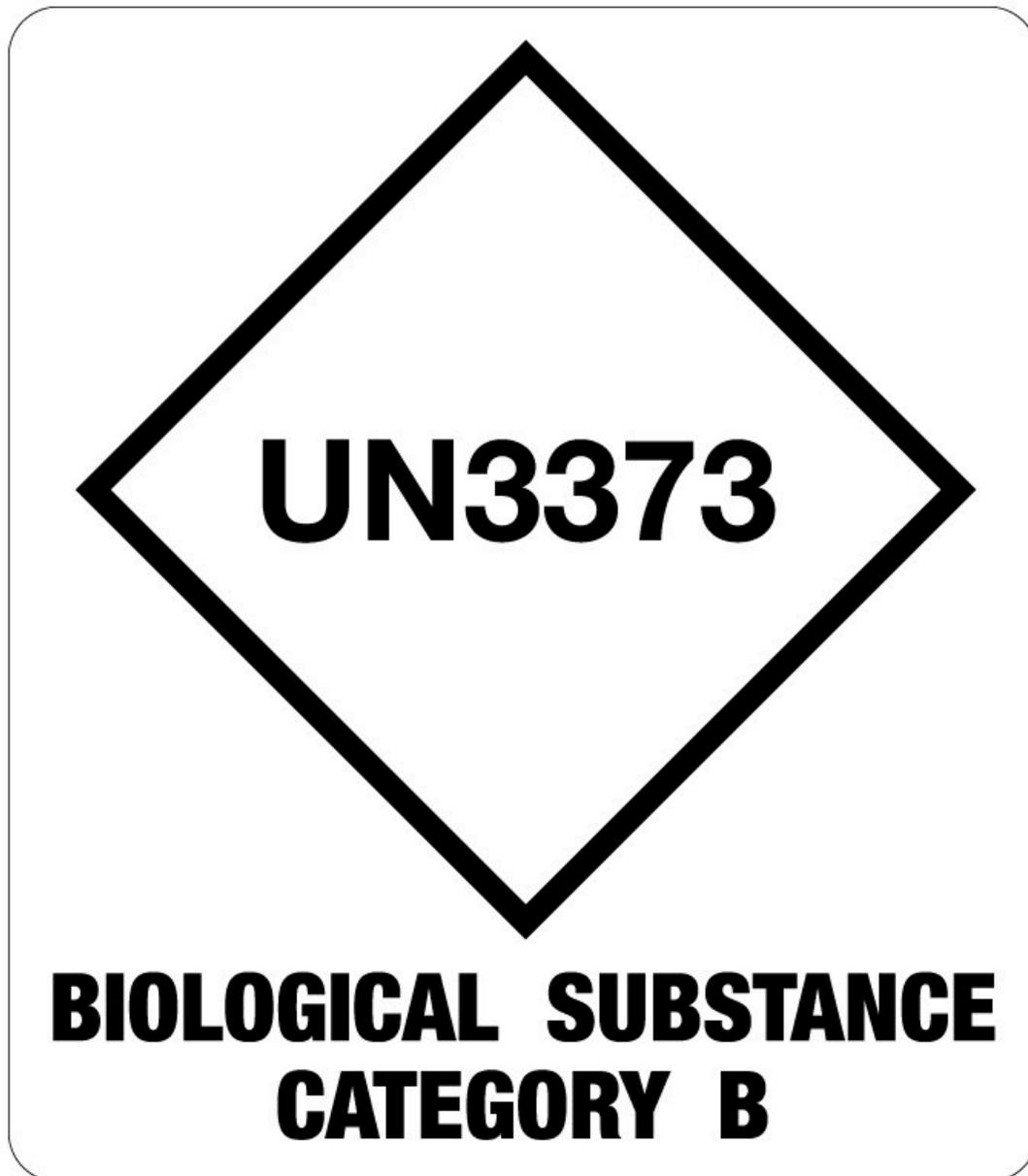
SHIPPING THE CEPHEID SWABS.

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:

Biological Substance, Category B (UN 3373) Marking Requirements



"Biological Substance, Category B" must appear in 6-mm-high text on the outer package adjacent to a diamond-shaped mark like the one shown here. The UN 3373 marking must be in the form of a square set at an angle of 45 degrees. Each side of the UN 3373 diamond should measure a minimum of 2" (50 mm). The width of the diamond rule line must be a minimum of 2 mm, and the letters and numbers must be at least 6 mm high.



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



University of New Hampshire <https://nhvdl.unh.edu/sending-specimens>

CONTACT INFORMATION.

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