



# Shipping Samples To and From Field Research Sites - or - How to Avoid VIPs (Vials in Pocket)

It is not unusual for Princeton University researchers to ship materials to and from field research sites. Before you ship, check with Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) to determine if your items are controlled by international shipping regulations. Materials that are regulated for shipping are referred to as Hazardous Materials, internationally as “Dangerous Goods”. Failure to follow regulations that govern shipment of Dangerous Goods can result in confiscation of your samples and issuance of significant fines to both you and the University.

## How do I ship supplies that may be regulated to my field research site?

Request assistance from EHS. If you provide notice of at least 3 days, EHS will prepare and ship materials regulated as “Dangerous Goods” to your field research site. If your research site is remote, we will ship the packages to the closest courier delivery site.

Here are some examples of materials that EHS has shipped to field research sites:

- Alcohol and solvent preservatives
- Lithium metal and ion batteries
- Compressed gas cylinders

## I am collecting samples in the field. Can I transport them back to Princeton University in my checked luggage and/or carry them with me on the plane?

That depends on the nature of your sample. Chemicals and biological material are typically regulated as “Dangerous Goods” and must be prepared, packed and shipped in accordance with regulations and by a trained shipper. Before you carry materials on a plane or check them in your bag:

- Check with EHS to determine if the material is permitted to be carried on /checked onto passenger aircraft. If it is not regulated, EHS can provide a “exemption notification” letter describing your samples.
- Verify that you do not need an import permit to bring your

samples into the United States and/or New Jersey. See the handout, “Do I Need an Import permit?”

- Always check with the carrier ahead of your departure date and before you bring the material on-board.

If your samples are restricted, EHS can:

- Provide you with the required training, so that you can legally package and ship your samples from your field site using a courier service.

## How do I ship clinical samples to a collaborator for testing?

Check with EHS to determine if your samples are regulated. You may also need a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Import Permit if you are shipping samples into the United States.

## May I ship non-regulated biological materials in preservative?

Yes, non-infectious specimens such as mammals, birds, fish and insects containing small quantities of preservative, including ethanol or formalin with less than 10% formaldehyde may be exempt from certain shipping regulations. The preservative must be effective against all human and animal pathogens that could be present in the sample.

Special Provision A180, issued by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) provides detailed instructions for packing, labeling and documenting samples that qualify for this exemption.

### Samples (Inner Packaging)

- Specimens in plastic bags: Wrap prepared specimens in cheese cloth or paper towel. Place in a bag such that there is not more than 30ml of free liquid in the bag. Heat seal this bag. Note: Plastic bags must be heat sealed to ensure they are leak-tight.
- Specimens in sample tubes: place specimen in tubes with preservative, not exceeding 30ml preservative per vial. Place tubes in a plastic bag and heat seal.

### Outer Packaging

- Place the sample containers in a larger plastic bag with

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enough absorbent material to soak up the total quantity of free liquid that might spill. Heat seal this larger plastic bag.

- Place the large plastic bag(s) in a strong outer package (e.g., cardboard box) with cushioning material, such that there is no more than 1L of liquid total in each outer package.
- The total quantity of preservative in the outer package must not exceed 1L, and total quantity in each inner package must not exceed 30mL. All plastic bags must be heat-sealed.
- Seal up the box, putting a copy of any export/import permits inside the box.

## Label

- On the outside of the box, write: “Scientific research specimens, not restricted, Special Provision A180 applies.”

## Document

If using an air waybill, check the dangerous goods option “Yes – Shipper’s declaration not required.” In the description-of-contents section, write “*Scientific research specimens, not restricted, Special Provision A180 applies.*” Place a copy of all your import/export permits in the plastic sleeve with the waybill.

## I will transport hazardous materials while out in the field. What precautions should I follow?

Researchers often transport materials from a collection site to a field station or on-site laboratory. Check with EHS for advice.

Regulated materials that often need to be transported to and from field sites typically include:

- Dry ice, oxygen and other compressed gas cylinders
- Alcohol and solvent preservatives
- Lithium-metal and -ion batteries

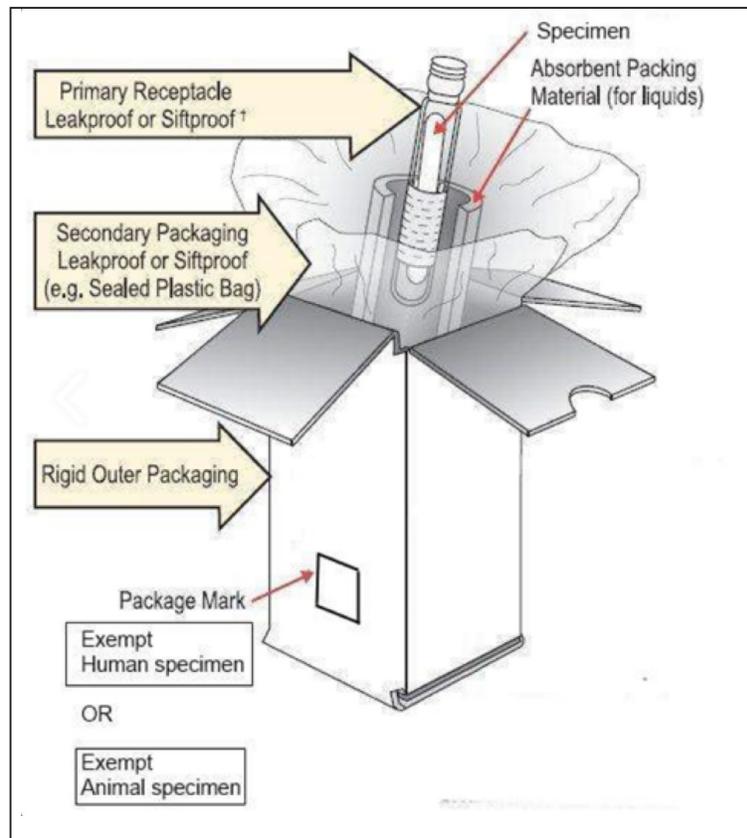
## Can I ship or bring controlled substances with me to my field research site?

No. Controlled substances purchased under Princeton Uni-

versity’s DEA license must be stored and used in designated campus locations only. Please consult with the University’s Laboratory Animal Resource veterinarian for assistance or work with your on-site collaborator.

## I have verified that my biological samples are not regulated, how should I package them?

Triple pack all biological samples, regardless of classification.



Triple Packaging

## What about shipping samples on dry ice?

Dry Ice is regulated as a Dangerous Good. Complete the Dry Ice online training session, found on the University’s training website ([www.princeton.edu/training](http://www.princeton.edu/training)). If you successfully complete the online training and your samples are not regulated as Dangerous Goods, you can ship the material.