



## Bio Basics Fact Sheet: Shipping Exempt Patient Specimens

### Introduction



The IATA (air transport) and Department of Transportation regulations have been amended to make some patient specimens exempt from Dangerous Goods requirements. These regulations apply to both air and ground transportation.

Exempt substances do not require a Declaration of Dangerous Goods or hazardous material training. However, if the substance is shipped on dry ice the dangerous goods regulation for dry ice must be followed and training is still required.

Exempt patient specimens must be properly packaged, see below.

For UPS guidelines to ship diagnostic specimens see

<http://www.ups.com/content/us/en/resources/prepare/hazardous/responsible/diagnostic.html>.

For the U.S. Postal Service see <http://www.usps.com/cpim/ftp/pubs/pub52.pdf>.

### Exempt Substances

The following are exempt from IATA's hazardous material regulations:

- Substances which do not contain infectious substances or substances which are unlikely to cause disease in humans or animals.
- Substances containing micro-organisms which are non-pathogenic to humans or animals.
- Patient specimens for which there is minimal likelihood that pathogens are present.

**Note:** Patient specimens are material collected directly from humans or animals, including, but not limited to, excreta, secretions, blood and its components, tissue and tissue fluid swabs, and body parts being transported for purpose such as research, diagnosis, investigational activities, disease treatment and prevention.

**Note:** In determining whether a patient specimen has a minimal likelihood that pathogens are present, an element of professional judgment is required to determine if a substance is exempt. That judgment should be based on the known medical history, symptoms and individual circumstances of the source, human or animal, and endemic local conditions. If there is any reason to suspect that the specimen contains a pathogen, it can not be

shipped as exempt from Class 6.2 Hazardous Material.

- Substances in a form that any present pathogens have been neutralized or inactivated such that they no longer pose a health risk.
- Environmental samples (including food and water samples) which are not considered to pose a significant risk of infection.
- Dried blood spots, collected by applying a drop of blood onto absorbent material, or faecal occult blood screening tests.
- Material collected for transfusion or transplantation.

## Packaging Requirements for Exempt Patient Specimens

- Use a leak-proof primary receptacle.
- When multiple fragile primary receptacles are placed in a single secondary package they must be either individually wrapped or otherwise separated to prevent contact between them.
- For liquid specimens, place sufficient absorbent material between the primary and secondary package to be able to absorb the entire volume.
- Use a leak-proof secondary receptacle.
- Use an outer package of adequate strength for its capacity, mass and intended use.
- The outer package must have at least one surface with minimum dimensions of 100mm x 100mm. If the outer package is smaller, place it in a shipping envelope.
- Mark the outer package "Exempt Human Specimen" or "Exempt Animal Specimen".
- For the FedEx Airbill question "Does shipment contain dangerous goods?" check no.

