



Office of the
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Office of
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Shipping Hazardous Material

During the course of research, materials are often shipped from one location to another. While some materials can be shipped without restriction, many more are classified and regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) as hazardous materials. DOT regulations governing the transport of these materials were formulated to enable their safe transport and to minimize the risk to health and property.

What are Hazardous Materials?

Hazardous materials are substances or materials which are capable of posing an unreasonable risk to health, safety, and property when transported in commerce. This includes laboratory chemicals, radioactive materials, compressed gases, biological agents, diagnostic specimens, refrigerants and equipment or instruments that contain hazardous materials.

Materials that are shipped to a lab for testing or analysis, sent to a colleague for collaborative research, shipped to another research facility, returned to the manufacturer, or sent to a field research site, must follow all applicable shipping requirements. To comply, regulated materials are classified according to their hazards, properly packaged, labeled, documented, and handled by trained employees.

Penalty For Non-compliance

In recent years, the DOT has launched a program to aggressively pursue persons and companies who fail to comply with regulations that dictate how biological, chemical and radioactive materials must be mailed or shipped. This has been accomplished by increasing the number of inspectors five-fold and has resulted in the collection of \$14 million in fines since 1997. Possible consequences for failure to comply include the following:

- Packages could be refused by the carrier
- Delivery of packages could be delayed
- ISU could lose shipping privileges
- Specimens or equipment could be damaged or destroyed
- Clean up of leaking packages could result in increased liability for ISU
- Citations may be issued against the originator
- Shipment originator could be fined from \$250—\$500,000.
- Shipment originator could face up to 5 years in prison.

For Assistance

EH&S (Environmental Health & Safety) is available to help determine what materials are considered hazardous and assist in efforts to comply. A *Hazardous Materials Shipping Guide* (www.ehs.iastate.edu/publications/hazmatshipping.htm) has been created to guide you through the process of mailing these materials. Additional information is available at www.ehs.iastate.edu/ih/shipping.htm. Required training for shipping and receiving hazardous materials is available through EH&S's Hazardous Materials Shipping Awareness classes. Sign up and schedules are available by calling 294-5359 or on-line at www.ehs.iastate.edu/training/training.htm.

Hazardous materials shipping questions should be directed to Suzanne Pris at 294-7417 or Richard McColley at 294-9561.

Reminder: If biological materials are being shipped to another research laboratory, public or private, in addition to the above requirements, a Material Transfer Agreement is also required by ISU.

If you have any questions about this tip sheet or working with industry, please contact: Lisa Lorenzen, Biotechnology Industrial Liaison, 1210 Molecular Biology Building, Phone: (515) 294-0926, Email: llorenze@iastate.edu

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