

Packing Rabies Specimens for Shipment to the NCSLPH

Before you begin:

- Review our testing criteria and training at <https://slph.ncpublichealth.com/virology-serology/rabies.asp>.
- Call the Communicable Disease Branch if pre-approval is needed at 919-733-3419, such as for after-hours emergency testing (4pm Friday thru 12pm Saturday). The Rabies Lab on-call person can be reached at 919-280-8915 for after-hours testing.
- Large animal specimens (ex: horses, livestock) are to be first sent to the Rollins Animal Disease Laboratory, 919-733-3986.

Primary Container



- 1. Treat the specimen for fleas, maggots, ticks, etc. if needed.**
- 2. Place the specimen in a clear ziplock bag.**
Do not use garbage bags or red biohazard bags. It is important for laboratory staff to be able to see the specimen. Send bats whole.
- 3. Add absorbent material to the bag.**
Use enough material to absorb any liquids in the primary container. Do not wrap bats, and do not wrap larger specimens unless bones, teeth, etc. could puncture the bag.
- 4. Seal the primary container.**
Must be leak proof, use duct tape if unsure.

Can I put more than one specimen in a bag?

No, each one is double bagged to prevent cross-contamination. Specimens can go in the same shipping container if their bags are clearly labeled and each has their own DHHS 1614 form.



Secondary Container



- 5. Place the sealed primary container inside another clear ziplock bag.**
- 6. Seal this secondary container.**
Must be leak proof, use duct tape if unsure.
- 7. Place a biohazard label on the secondary container.**

Should I also put a biohazard label on the outer shipping box?

No, only on the secondary container. Different labels go on the outer container.

Tertiary Container



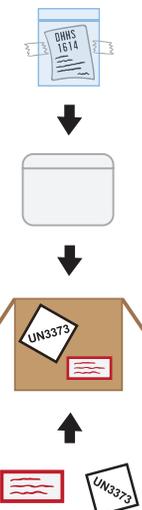
- 8. Place newspaper or other packing material as cushioning inside an insulated box, such as a styrofoam cooler.**
Container must be at least one-inch thick styrofoam or equivalent.
- 9. Add cold packs.**
These also need to be leakproof.
Please do not use wet (regular) ice or dry ice.
- 10. Place the double-bagged specimen on top of the cold pack(s).**
- 11. Add more packing material on top of the specimen.**
- 12. Add enough cold packs to keep the specimen chilled during travel.**
The specimen should be snug inside the box, but not crushed.

How many cold packs should I use?

When in doubt, add more cold packs. The Rabies Lab can usually work with frozen tissues, but test results can be impacted if the tissues decompose.

If the weather is hot or shipping may be delayed, add extra cold packs.

Form and Labels



- 13. Completely fill out the Rabies Examination form, [DHHS 1614](#). Place form in its own ziplock bag and seal.**
- 14. Tape the form to the top of the insulated container or place inside.**
If an outer container is not used, the form must go inside the insulated container so that it does not get lost in transit.
- 15. Place the insulated container inside a sturdy cardboard box and seal with clear packing tape.**
Use of a cardboard box is a requirement for Category B shipping for FedEx, UPS, and US Mail. The only exception is if you are using the State Courier AND the insulated container is at least 2 inches thick.
- 16. Attach a return address label that states: "This package contains an animal head suspected of having rabies."**
We strongly recommend using our red labels, available on our site.
- 17. Attach a UN3373 Biological Substance Category B label.**

Who should I put as the phone contact?

We will call this number with the test results. Particularly if this submission is for an emergency case sent outside of normal business hours, the phone number must be for someone who will be available.

Can I use one form for multiple specimens?

No, each specimen gets its own form, even if the animals exposed the same person.

Why should I use your red labels?

It ensures the specimen goes to the right place, helping turnaround time.

