



Safety Instruction

Shipping Preserved Specimens

Using IATA Special Provision A180 to Ship Preserved Specimens

Ethanol and formalin are hazardous materials and bringing them on a plane breaks several laws and can be punished very severely. In other words, don't take ethanol or formalin on a plane. The instructions below apply to **shipping non-infectious specimens**, such as specimens of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, insects and other invertebrates in small quantities of preservative (formaldehyde solution or alcohol such as EtOH or isopropanol).

If you decide to use ethanol or formalin to pickle or preserve your specimens in the field, then you'll have to ship your specimens home using a carrier like FedEx (do not take them on the plane or in your checked baggage). Formalin with less than 10% formaldehyde is not regulated. Specimens in ethanol can be shipped in small quantities under International Air Transport Association (IATA) Special Provision A180. Although there are a number of steps to follow, shipping under these exceptions is straightforward.

PACKAGING 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.
- Specimens in sample tubes: place tissues in tubes with preservative, not exceeding 30ml preservative per vial. Place tubes in a plastic bag and heat seal.

OUTER PACKAGING:

- Place the sample plastic bags in a larger plastic bag with enough absorbent material to soak up any free liquid that might spill. Heat seal this larger plastic bag.
- Place the large plastic bag(s) in a strong outer package with cushioning material, such that there is no more than 1L of liquid in this outer package.

In summary: 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.

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