UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Biosafety Division
Department of Environmental Health & Safety
Risk Management Services

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TRANSFER OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIALS ON CAMPUS

If material containing a viable risk group 2 agent is transferred between floors or buildings on the University of Alberta campus, then personnel shall abide by the following guidelines:

a) The primary container of biological material shall be sealed in an appropriately-sized zip-lock bag containing enough absorbent material to contain the biological material if a leak from the primary container occurs. Once the bag is sealed, it shall be surface decontaminated with a disinfectant appropriate to the material involved and then labeled with the researcher's name, date and sample contents.

- Research groups shall use a zip-lock bag labeled with a biohazard symbol or affix a biohazard sticker to the side of a regular zip-lock bag. Note, however after the material has been transferred and removed from the bag, the biohazard symbol or sticker must be defaced prior to disposing of the zip-lock bag.

b) The zip-lock package shall then be placed in a cooler (or equivalent safety container) with a water-tight, fastenable lid. The lid must remain sealed if the cooler were to be dropped from waist height. The research group shall label the cooler with the name of the Principal Investigator and the laboratory's address and phone number but shall not place any biohazard symbols on the outside of the cooler.

c) Personnel transferring the material shall not wear laboratory coats or disposable gloves for the transfer. Personnel shall also carry a cell phone with them during the transfer.

- The one exception to this guideline is when picking up clinical specimens from some of the University of Alberta Hospital departments which will only release specimens to personnel in laboratory coats. In this case, personnel picking up the material shall wear a laboratory coat dedicated to this tasking and not one that has been used at the bench or in a biological safety cabinet for research manipulations.

d) Personnel transferring the material are to proceed directly from the pick-up location to the delivery location and are not to deviate from the path to conduct other errands. Personnel transferring the material are not to stop along the way to use washroom facilities, to purchase food or drink, etc.

e) Once personnel have arrived at their destination, they shall don safety glasses, a fully fastened laboratory coat or gown, and disposable gloves before opening the cooler to empty the contents.

f) In the event the cooler is dropped or otherwise damaged during transit:

- If material is observed leaking out of the cooler, leave cooler in place and immediately contact Campus Emergency (780-492-5555) via the cell phone to activate a Biohazards Emergency Response for assistance in clean-up. Personnel are to stay with the cooler and prevent anyone from walking over the affected site until assistance arrives.
- If the cooler remains intact, then personnel are to continue on to the delivery point. Once there open the cooler within a biological safety cabinet to determine status of the zip-lock package and whether or not a leak or breakage occurred.
- If breakage or leaking occurred, place the zip-lock package in autoclave waste and decontaminate the inner surfaces of the cooler with a 10% solution of household bleach (contact time of at least 10 minutes).

These guidelines are also recommended for the transfer of non-pathogenic biological materials through public spaces where visualization of the materials may alarm the public. For example, blood from a laboratory mouse may be considered non-pathogenic but if you are hand carrying vials through a public area those around you won't know what kind of blood it is. These guidelines do not apply to the transfer of animal carcasses or infected animals between research and animal holding facilities. The research group shall obtain protocols for the transfer of animals and animal carcasses from the University Animal Service department (i.e., HSLAS, BSAS or AFNSAS) that originally provided the animals.

The above guidelines only apply to the transfer of biological materials on foot within the University of Alberta campus. Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) regulations apply to the transfer of all hazardous materials (including biological hazards) off the University campus and require that the material is prepared and shipped by research personnel with valid TDG certification.

For additional information on the transfer of biological materials at the University of Alberta, please submit inquiries to the Biosafety Division via EHS_RSR@ehs.ualberta.ca.