EVIDENCE SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

US Fish and Wildlife Service
National Fish and Wildlife Forensic Laboratory
1490 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520

Introduction

The Mission of the National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory (Laboratory) is to provide forensic support in wildlife investigations.

The purpose of this guide is to help you with proper and safe evidence documentation, packaging and shipping procedures so that your evidence shipment meets:

1) U.S. Department of Transportation regulations
2) Laboratory requirements for analysis
3) Requirements for presentation in courts of law

Good Communication

Call the Laboratory if you have <u>any</u> additional questions about how to best ship your evidence to the Lab. We are here to serve your needs.

Contact us at: National Fish and Wildlife Forensics Laboratory
1490 East Main Street
Ashland, OR 97520
Phone: (541) 482-4191
Fax: (541) 482-4989
Email: NFWFL_EVIDENCE@FWS.GOV

* * * *

IMPORTANT NOTE on SHIPPING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

The U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) requires that Anyone who ships hazardous materials be trained and tested. *49 CFR Subpart H, Parts 172-700-704*

Furthermore, Anyone who knowingly violates a requirement of the Federal hazardous material transportation law is liable to civil penalties which may include fines and imprisonment. *49 CFR Part 171.1 (g)*

The types of hazardous materials encountered in shipping evidence include, but are not limited to:

- Pesticides, poisons, and other chemicals (or items tainted with these chemicals)
- Live ammunition
- Biological materials known or suspected to be infected with disease
- Lithium batteries - if removed from devices and packaged separately
- Dry ice

USDOT Training and Testing is Required for Shipping Hazardous Materials

Infectious Disease

Evidence items that are known or suspected to be infected with a disease which represents a real or perceived threat to humans, wildlife, or domestic livestock and poultry, may require a special permit for handling, packaging, labeling and shipping containment identified in Public Health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) regulations found in 42 CFR Parts 70-75 and 49 CFR Parts 171-173.

These items include, but are not limited to:

- Perishable carcasses or tissues from foreign sources
- Primate carcasses or tissues from any source

* * * *

Call the Laboratory Evidence Unit for questions and assistance with any evidence requiring special packaging and/or shipping
541-482-4191

INDEX

SECTION		PAGE
1	Safety	4
2	Preparing for Court	4
	Sealing and Tagging Evidence	5
	Chain of Custody	5
3	Packaging Materials	6
4	Documents Used in Submitting Evidence	7
5	General Guidance on Packaging and Shipping Non Perishable Evidence	8
6	Animal Carcasses and Odor Control	9
7	Bush meat *(May require USDOT Training and Testing)*	13
8	Evidence for DNA Analysis	14
9	Caviar Evidence	15
10	Bird Evidence	16
11	Firearms	17
12	Expended Projectiles and Cartridge Casings	18
13	Live Ammunition *(Requires USDOT Training and Testing)*	19
14	Pesticide Evidence *(Requires USDOT Training and Testing)*	20
15	Latent Print Evidence	24
16	Digital Imagery	25

1. Safety

Keeping yourself, your co-workers, family, and everyone who comes into contact with the evidence safe during collection, packaging, shipping and receipt by the Laboratory should always be on your mind. Using proper Personal Protective Equipment where needed (latex or nitrile gloves, Tyvek coveralls and special footwear) and using good collection, packaging, cleanup, transport and storage methods will minimize the possibility that someone becomes ill or is injured.

2. Preparing for Court

The mindset before handling any evidence in an investigation should be that it will show up in court and be questioned as to its integrity. How each item of evidence is documented, collected, packaged, sealed, labeled, tagged, preserved and shipped is vital to maintaining its usefulness in the investigation.

The goal of good evidence handling is to preserve the physical, chemical, biochemical and legal integrity of the evidence so that …

- The analytical value of the evidence does not change.
- There is no cause for reasonable doubt about the stated chain of custody.
- The evidence is packaged and labeled in such a way as to keep everyone safe throughout the handling and shipping process.

When the evidence arrives at the Laboratory for analysis:

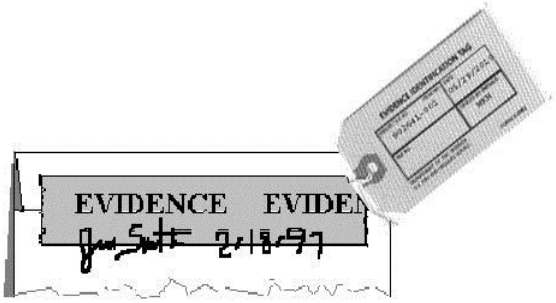
- All tags, chains, documents should be properly and legibly filled out with no erroneous information.
- All evidence is accounted for – submission documents and the chain of custodies correspond to all items that were shipped.
- All evidence is properly sealed.
- All packaging is intact i.e. no tears or holes in packages that can result in leaking, cross contamination or loss of evidence.
- All fragile evidence has been wrapped to prevent breakage.
- Latent print evidence has been handled and packaged properly to prevent damage.
- There are no noxious odors escaping from packages.
- All digital evidence has been packaged to preserve the data.
- All hazardous evidence has been packaged following the USDOT regulations so that there is no illness, injury or death to anyone handling the package.

2a. Sealing and Tagging Evidence

All evidence sent to the Laboratory must be properly sealed in a container so that the contents cannot be switched, altered, contaminated or damaged without detection. The seal includes taping all container openings with "evidence tape" and placing your initials and the date across the margin of the tape and the container.

Preserving Seals An important aspect of sealing evidence is to preserve, where possible, each seal that has been placed on the evidence packaging. A sealed package should be opened in another location to preserve the original seal. Each subsequent opening should be in a new location. Each person who opens the package will be the same person resealing the package unless they have transferred that requirement to someone else as recorded on the chain of custody.

All Seizure and Evidence tags should be attached to the outside of each sealed package- not inside a sealed package and comingling with the evidence.



- Package is sealed with Evidence Tape.
- Your initials and date across tape margin.
- Completed tag attached to outside.

2b. Chain of Custody

One of the most important documents for the courtroom presentation of evidence is a complete chain of custody. The chain of custody, either represented as a tag on the evidence or a page which follows the evidence, is used as …

- A means of documenting the chronological history of an item (or items) of physical evidence from initial collection to final disposition.
- A means of documenting all people by signature and date who have had the evidence in their possession since it was collected.
- A means of providing a receipt (a Xeroxed copy of the filled-out form) to the person transferring custody of the evidence to another person. Note: the original form always goes with the evidence.

3. Packaging Materials

Maintaining the integrity of your evidence includes using good quality packaging. The Laboratory will supply some packaging materials in the form of kits for certain types of evidence such as caviar, pesticides, tissue preservation collection and carcass odor control. Call the Evidence Unit of the Laboratory if you have questions or are in need of any of these kits.

Some containers you will need to fabricate yourself to hold items, such as latent print evidence steady and in place, so that its integrity is maintained.

Primary Containers (containers that the evidence is placed into first) should be new, clean, unused and undamaged boxes, bags, plastic bottles, metal containers, etc., that can completely contain the evidence and allow for proper sealing. Of course, hard-shelled plastic or metal gun cases don't have to be new, but all hinges and closure hasps need to function properly. Primary containers must remain intact and not allow leaking of the contents.

Secondary Containers (containers that primary-packaged evidence is placed into next) can be new or used boxes, bags, plastic bottles, metal containers, etc., but still must be clean and undamaged.

Outer Containers (containers to which shipping labels are affixed) can also be either new or used sturdy and intact cardboard, plastic or metal, but still must be clean and undamaged. Coolers used in shipping perishable evidence, carcasses, etc., must be undamaged with all hinges and closure hasps functioning properly. There must be NO written indication on the outer container that it contains evidence.

> NEVER use Styrofoam as an outer shipping container. Styrofoam can be easily compromised and are prone to splitting open during shipment. Shipping in Styrofoam as an inner or primary container should be fine as long as it is placed in a sturdy OUTER container for shipment to the lab.

Bubble Wrap and Padding should be used for fragile evidence to protect from breakage. Padding should also be used on evidence with sharp edges, points or blades such as arrowheads and knives, or sharp claws, talons, teeth, splintered bones or any other item which can cause injury when handled.

Freezer Pack Ice or Blue Ice can be new or used (but clean) and of adequate quantity to assist in preserving perishable evidence.

4. Documents Used in Submitting Evidence

Three documents are required in each submission of evidence to the Laboratory:

- Evidence Tags.
- Evidence Submittal Form.
- Chain of Custody.

Evidence Tags All evidence items need to be tagged with a completed white *Evidence Seizure Tag* (Form 3-487) or a blue *Evidence Identification Tag* (Form 3-2052).

Evidence Submittal Form The Lab's Evidence Submittal Form identifies important information about your submission. A PDF version of the form is available.

The submittal form should be filled out as completely as possible. The following information is required:

- Your case number.
- The name of the investigator requesting analysis.
- Your return address and phone number.
- An item-for-item list of the evidence being sent for examination.
- An item-for-item examination request.
- Special instructions regarding handling, return or forwarding of evidence.

Chain-of-Custody Form (Form 3-2063) A completed chain of custody is required for all evidence items submitted to the Laboratory. The white Evidence Seizure Tag can serve as a Chain of Custody for submitting evidence to the Laboratory but it is preferred that the 8.5 x 11 *Chain of Custody Form* (Form 3-2063) be used. A PDF version of the form is available.

5. General Guidance on Packaging and Shipping Non-Perishable Evidence

The following guidance outlines the general steps taken to document, package, and ship evidence to the Laboratory. See the specific requirement sections for guidance on unique evidence types.

1. Package each item of evidence in primary containers (bags, boxes, etc.).
2. Seal the evidence.
3. Attach completed and uniquely numbered Seizure Tags / Evidence Tags to each item.
4. Fill out the Evidence Submittal Form and *signed* Chain of Custody Form and place it along with any other paperwork in an envelope.
5. Place the sealed evidence and envelope into an UNMARKED shipping container.
6. Draw a circled letter 'E' on the outside of each shipping package to alert the Laboratory that this parcel contains evidence. Do not affix evidence tape to the outer container.
7. Address all evidence shipping packages to:

   ATTENTION: EVIDENCE UNIT
   USFWS/LE FORENSICS LABORATORY
   1490 EAST MAIN STREET
   ASHLAND, OR 97520

8. Ship via US Postal or with commercial carrier using traceable methods. For perishable evidence (carcasses and tissue samples), ship <u>overnight</u> on Mondays or Tuesdays so that the package arrives during the work week.

A Note on Shipping Multiple Packages: If your evidence submission consists of more than one package, indicate the total number of packages on your Evidence Submittal Form. In addition, mark the outside of the shipping packages 1 of 3, 2 of 3, 3 of 3, etc. Place the original Evidence Submittal form and Chain of Custody in box 1 and a *copy* of the Evidence Submittal Form in the other boxes. This will assist the Evidence Unit staff in identifying shipping packages that arrive on different days.

6. Animal Carcasses and Odor Control

Carcasses require special packaging and labeling for shipment.

***** ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY *****

Notes on Carcasses

1. **Call the Pathology Section** of the Laboratory and discuss your submission if you have carcass evidence of the following types:

    - Carcasses that are suspected or known to be infected with disease
    - Carcasses which were used as pesticide baits.
    - Significant number of carcasses (20 or more).

2. **Cooling the carcass** Carcasses may be shipped to the Lab in a fresh or frozen state.

    - Any carcasses that are not significantly decomposed may be shipped to the Lab without being frozen. Immediately after collection, ice the carcass in a cooler to preserve the tissues. **Triple bag** the carcass and ship on blue ice within 24 hours of collection. Note on the submission sheet that the carcass is fresh-never-frozen and call the Lab to discuss shipment and receipt.

    - Significantly decomposed carcasses and carcasses that can't be shipped immediately should be frozen soon after collection in the field. If large carcasses, such as wolves, are to be shipped frozen, they should be packaged and frozen in the container you will use to ship it so that the evidence assumes the shape of the container. Otherwise, it may be difficult to package.

3. **Preserving Trace Evidence on Carcasses** Carcasses of wildlife found in the field may be submitted for more than just cause of death and species identification analysis. Trace fibers found in the hair coat of mammals or the plumage of birds may help point to individuals that came into contact with that animal before the agent arrived on the scene.

    - In order to preserve fibers on the body, the animal should be carefully placed in the plastic bag before removal from the crime scene and should stay in that bag through the remainder of the packaging and shipping process.

    - Solid items (such as traps and collars) found with the carcass may have fingerprint evidence on their surfaces. These items should be handled, packaged, and shipped with the care outlined in the section on Latent Print evidence.

4. **Pesticide-Laced Bait Carcasses** Carcasses used as bait that are laced with pesticides cannot be shipped to the Lab. Suspected pesticides on the carcass should be collected following the guidance under Pesticides, Poisons and Other Chemicals section below.

5. **Oiled birds** require special packaging in order to preserve the volatile chemicals within the feathers so that further testing can be performed. Instructions:

    - Oiled birds should be wrapped completely in aluminum foil.
    - The foil-wrapped bird can then be placed in two more layers of plastic bags prior to shipping.

6. **Padding Sharp Edges** To prevent tearing of evidence bags leading to cross contamination of samples and possible injury to evidence handlers, use padding to cover beaks, talons, claws, teeth, broken bones, etc., of carcasses, especially where pesticide death is suspected.

7. **Hard-Shelled Insulated Coolers** The outer package must be a clean, undamaged, hard-shelled insulated cooler (plastic or metal) with working hinges.

8. **"Exempt Biological Specimen" Labeling** Packages with carcasses need to be labeled with an "Exempt Biological Specimen" label for shipping.

9. **Ship Overnight on Mondays or Tuesdays** To be sure packages arrive during work days.

10. **Leaks and Odors** To meet U.S. DOT requirements for shipping, it is essential that packages DO NOT have any leaks or odors.

    If the package leaks or has a noxious odor which causes a hazardous condition for pilots and ground transportation, the USDOT WILL INVESTIGATE.

Odor Control

Carcasses that DO NOT have any odors should be tripled-wrapped in thick, heavy duty plastic bags and sealed tightly to prevent any leaks.

U.S. DOT requires that packages being shipped exhibit NO noxious odors. Special, odor-control kits are provided by the Laboratory and are available on request. These kits include:

- Saranex odor barrier bag
- Heavy-duty plastic bag
- Odor-absorbing carbon cloth bag

- Vinyl body bag
- Carbon filter (by special request)
- Roll of duct tape and zip ties
- “Exempt Biological Specimen” shipping label

Odor Packaging Instructions:

1. Place carcass into the Saranex bag first then the heavy duty plastic bag; wrapping each bag tightly with duct tape to remove air pockets from between the carcass and the bags
2. Zip-tie the ends on each bag.
3. Place an Evidence Seal on the plastic bag.
4. Attach completed Evidence Seizure tag.

Saranex bag

Heavy duty plastic bag with Evidence Seal

5. Place carcass into the black carbon bag and zip tie the end; then into the vinyl body bag.

Carbon cloth bag

Vinyl body bag

FOR CARCASSES THAT STILL EXHIBIT ODORS

6. Place the carbon filter inside the vinyl body bag.

7. Add freezer-pack blue ice (no dry ice) where necessary; close and tape the lid with fiber-filled strapping or duct tape.

8. Attach the “Exempt Biological Specimen” label and ship overnight to the Lab.

7. Bush meat

"Bush meat" consists of partial carcasses or carcass parts that have been smoked prior to selling for food or talismans. Because bush meat items are crudely dried as a means of preservation, the tissues may still pose a potential hazard. This is especially the case if there are indications that the tissues are of primate origin. Avoid contact with the tissues if they are, or appear, moldy or putrid.

***** ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY *****

Infectious Disease As stated previously, evidence items which are known or suspected to be infected with disease which represents a real or perceived threat to humans, wildlife, or domestic livestock and poultry, may require a special permit for handling, packaging, labeling and shipping containment identified in Public Health (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Agriculture/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service) regulations found in 42 CFR Parts 70-75.

Call the Laboratory prior to shipping bush meat evidence to the Laboratory.

For Packaging and Shipping Guidance:

1A. If it is determined that the Public Health guidance of 42 CFR must be followed, clearance and packaging guidance for the shipment will be sought from the relevant agency (CDC or USDA/APHIS).

All shipments following 42 CFR guidance require that the shipper be trained and tested under U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) regulations found in 49 CFR Parts 171 to 180.

1B. If it is determined that the bush meat does not fall under 42 CFR, follow the Animal Carcass and Odor Control guidelines for packaging.

2. Write an "EE" on all outer packages of bush meat evidence shipped to the Laboratory.

8. Evidence for DNA Analysis

Samples for DNA analysis may be obtained from a variety of sources – including fresh tissue, freezer meat, gut piles, blood (fresh or dried), feathers, bone, antler, horn, hair, cooked, canned or smoked meats, fresh tissue, and sometimes tissue or body fluids deposited on objects……..but it is the quality and quantity of DNA that will determine the success of the analysis.

***** ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY *****

DNA Evidence is Fragile Exposure to moisture and exposure to sunlight (UV radiation) are the two primary conditions that lead to rapid degradation of DNA. Keeping that in mind, you will want to collect samples for analysis that will maximize your chance of obtaining the best information. Two things to remember are:

1A. **If it's wet – freeze it.**

Collection and storage of fresh/ wet tissue or blood
If you are sampling from a fresh carcass or gut pile, muscle tissue or organ tissue are the best sources for DNA. Package the sample in a plastic bag and freeze as soon as possible. Be sure to wrap perishable tissues in multiple bags to prevent leaking and cross-contamination. If it is not possible to freeze the sample, at least keep it cold, or use beaded desiccant. Desiccant sampling kits and instructions are available from the Lab.

If the material to be sampled is decomposed or degraded, but under moist conditions, store the sample in a plastic container or bag and freeze as soon as possible. Beaded desiccant is not optimal for degraded or compromised tissues.

Wet blood samples may be collected by swabbing the sample with a cotton swab or gauze pad. Do not use paper or woven cloth because the blood sample will disperse and it will be more difficult to obtain good quality DNA. Collect samples to minimize the chance of having the blood of more than one animal present on the swab or gauze. Do not use beaded desiccant for wet blood.

1B. **If it's dry – keep it dry.**

Collection and storage of dried tissue or blood

Dry blood samples are best kept dry – scrapings of the blood may be collected in paper, or the object with the dried blood may be submitted whole to the lab (when practical or if it is of manageable size). If the dried blood cannot be sampled dry, use a cotton swab

or gauze pad wetted with clean water (not saliva or pond/lake water), and collect a concentrated spot of the blood sample.

Dried material such as dried tissue, bones, feathers, etc. should be kept dry and stored in paper containers.

9. Caviar Evidence

Caviar collection requires the use of a special 'kit' provided by the Laboratory. Call the Laboratory if you are in need of a kit.

Each caviar collection kit contains:

- 1 Large Tube (50 mL volume)
- 1 Wooden Tongue Depressor
- 4 Latex Gloves (Powder Free)
- 1 Zip-Lock Plastic Bag

How Much Caviar to Sample? For caviar shipments comprised of 100-1000 tins (i.e., 50 gram, 113 gram, 500 gram or 1.8 kilogram weights), randomly identify 30 tins for sampling. If there are fewer than 30 tins in the shipment, sample every tin. With a permanent marking pen, label each tin to be sampled as well as the box/carton from which each tin is selected with the Seizure Tag # for the case and the Item # for the tin. Maintain selected caviar tins at a cool temperature and out of direct sunlight.

Caviar evidence collection instructions:

- Open a collection kit and label the screw cap tube with the identifier corresponding to a labeled caviar tin. Record the identifier on the bag you received with the collection kit.
- Put on latex gloves, open the labeled caviar tin.
- Use the tongue depressor to transfer about a teaspoon of caviar (100 eggs) from the labeled tin into the labeled screw cap tube. Discard the tongue depressor.
- Close the tube securely and seal it in the labeled plastic bag. Close the caviar tin and return it to its original labeled box/carton. Discard the gloves.
- Repeat steps 1-4 as needed.

DO NOT FREEZE CAVIAR!

10. Bird Evidence

If the whole bird is available, ALWAYS SEND THE WHOLE BIRD. If a partial carcass (dry or wet) is available, SEND ALL OF THE AVAILABLE MATERIAL. The examiner will remove diagnostic feathers or parts, prepare them for identification, and return them with the remaining portions of your evidence.

Dry, non-perishable material: Follow the *General Guide to Packaging and Shipping Evidence*

Frozen material and oil-soaked birds: Package each bird separately, ideally in clear plastic, 'zip-lock' style bag. Review the specific points regarding shipping Animal Carcasses.

Art-work: Wrap flat items (fans, medicine wheels) in a plastic bag, tissue or other non-inked paper, and place in a box layered between styrofoam or foam peanuts. Large, flat crafted items should be placed on a sheet of cardboard and wrapped with plastic film. Items such as Kachina dolls should be cushioned in styrofoam or foam peanuts inside a sturdy box.

Single or loose feathers: Pack each item to be identified in labeled plastic bags. Take care that feathers will not be bent during packaging or shipping. If possible, mixed loose feathers should be sorted and packaged by type.

Down/trace evidence: Send the entire 'host' item (trap, stick, etc) or relevant part bearing the trace material to the Laboratory as a packaged evidence item. The examiner will examine the host item and remove the relevant material. NEVER collect or package trace feather evidence on adhesive tape.

11. **Firearms**

NO LOADED FIREARMS UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY LOADED FIREARMS BE SHIPPED TO THE LABORATORY! THIS MEANS BOTH THE CHAMBER AND MAGAZINE NEED TO BE CHECKED. Note: be aware that ammunition in tubular magazines on some 22 rifles may hang up in the tube.

BLACKPOWDER FIREARMS ALWAYS CALL THE LAB BEFORE SUBMITTING BLACKPOWDER FIREARMS.

LEAVE DETACHABLE MAGAZINES IN THE FIREARMS Test fires without the magazines are not the same as with the magazines in place.

LEAVE THE BOLTS IN BOLT ACTION RIFLES If the bolt is put into the rifle case separately it can move around in transit and damage the stock or scope.

FIREARM FUNCTION AND SAFETY If you have any concerns about the function/safety of a firearm, be sure to call the Firearms Examiner and state those concerns on your Evidence Submittal Form.

Collection Instructions:

- DO NOT ETCH OR CARVE YOUR INITIALS OR THE CASE NUMBER INTO THE STOCKS OR METAL OF FIREARMS. Record the serial number onto the Seizure Tag, Chain of Custody, and the Evidence Submittal Form.

- The firearm should be minimally handled to avoid loss or destruction of evidence. Do not allow objects to enter or contact the firearm's barrel, chamber or other operating surface.

- DO NOT TIE EVIDENCE TAGS AND SEIZURE TAGS THROUGH THE TRIGGER GUARD. The wire or string tags could cause a safety hazard and have to be removed before test-firing.

- It is recommended that investigators purchase a sturdy, cushioned-lined, hard plastic or metal gun case for shipping firearms. A locking case is preferred. **Ship the key separately**. Securely tape all clasps with packing tape to prevent accidental opening in transit. Do Not use a cardboard or styrofoam shipping box.

- Keep firearms at room temperature in dry conditions.

12. Expended Projectiles and Cartridge Casings

Test Fired Cartridges DO NOT PERSONALLY TEST FIRE A FIREARM AND COLLECT CARTRIDGE CASES, SHOT SHELLS, OR BULLETS FOR COMPARISON PURPOSES. Laboratory personnel will test fire all firearms. Some firearms may be unsafe to fire with modern ammunition and some ammunition is not suitable for comparisons. The laboratory will supply the test fire ammunition.

Protecting the Evidence

- DO NOT USE PLIERS, FORCEPS, KNIVES, OR SCREWDRIVERS TO REMOVE BULLETS. Rifling marks on bullets are easily damaged by contact with tools.

- DO NOT MARK CARTRIDGE CASES OR BULLETS. Mark the outside of the envelope with the description and initials.

- DO NOT SEND WET OR DAMP CARTRIDGE CASES, SHOT SHELLS, OR EXPENDED BULLETS. If these items are recovered wet or damp, allow them to dry before packaging. A water wash (no rubbing or scrubbing!) to remove excess organic material is encouraged unless genetic examinations are to be performed on the organic material. In that case, allow the blood or tissue to air-dry and then package the items in paper wrap, not plastic, and ship following the general package/shipping guidelines. Be sure to indicate if the firearms evidence has blood/tissue or latent prints that require additional examination.

- If cartridge case evidence is being submitted for Latent Print analysis, REFER TO THE SPECIAL PACKAGING REQUIREMENTS FOR LATENT PRINT EVIDENCE.

Package dry cartridge cases, shot shells, and expended bullets, individually in paper envelopes. Wrap them in tissue or paper towels first- not cotton- to keep them secure. Do not use plastic bags or other containers which may permit the growth of bacteria which is potentially harmful to micro-striated detail on bullets or promote rusting on cartridge cases and shot shells.

Individually wrap or otherwise protect all cases, shells and discharged bullets to prevent rubbing and abrasion during transit. The outer shipping container must be strong enough to prevent compression damage to all items in transit.

13. Live Ammunition

DO NOT SEND LIVE AMMUNITION TO THE LAB.

Live Ammunition must be shipped following U.S. Department of Transportation Regulations. YOU MUST BE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED FOLLOWING 49 CFR 172.704.

CONTACT THE FIREARMS UNIT OF THE LABORATORY

If, after contacting the Firearms Unit of the Lab, you are asked to submit live ammunition, the following points apply:

- Live ammunition must be shipped by a commercial transporter which is authorized by the DOT to handle hazardous materials. Live ammunition cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.

- Live ammunition must be packaged according to Federal DOT 49 CFR 173.63(b) These regulations are limited to the following types of ammunition:
    - Ammunition for rifle or pistol not exceeding 50 caliber.
    - Ammunition for shotgun no larger than 8 gauge.
    - Ammunition with inert projectiles (blanks).

- Ammunition must be packed in inside boxes, or in partitions which fit snugly in the outside packaging, or in metal clips.

- Primers must be protected from accidental detonation.

- Inside boxes, partitions or metal clips must be packed in securely-closed strong outside packaging.

14. Pesticide Evidence

Pesticides and other chemicals must be shipped following U.S. Department of Transportation Regulations. YOU MUST BE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED FOLLOWING 49 CFR 172.704!

***** ALWAYS WEAR PROPER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR SAFETY *****

Pesticide Collection Kits The Laboratory has special collection and packaging kits for shipping hazardous materials evidence to the Laboratory. These kits will allow you to prepare shipments of hazardous evidence in a manner which meets USDOT regulations. Call the Laboratory if you need a kit.

Each kit contains:

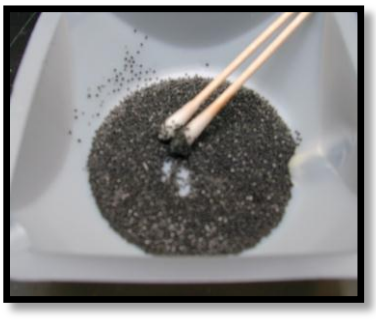
(3) 15 ml polypropylene tubes
(6) cotton-tipped applicators
(1) padded envelope
(1) 8 oz plastic container with screw cap lid
(2) zip-lock bags
(2) pair of latex gloves
(1) *DOT Excepted Quantities* label

Suspected pesticides must be shipped by Federal Express, UPS or other company which is authorized by the DOT to ship hazardous materials. Suspected pesticides cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.

Safety Be extremely careful when handling any chemical. Use rubber gloves to protect your hands and be careful of your clothing, shoes, tools, etc. Chemicals that wind up on your clothing etc can transfer to your vehicle, office and home and pose a potential safety hazard.

Collecting Pure Samples Regarding Pure Samples – chemicals that come straight from a bottle or can:

1. Coat the two cotton-tipped applicators with sample (solid or liquid). USDOT regulation 49 CFR 173.4 (a)(1)(iii) allows you to place up to 1 gram or 1 milliliter of sample into the tube.
2. Leave the applicators in the tube and tightly secure the screw cap.
3. If possible, always collect three tubes from the same source.



4. Label the three tubes as one item on the evidence submittal form.

<u>Collecting Diluted Samples</u> - including solid samples such as distinctly visible granules, powders or pastes or liquid samples with a distinctive color/odor on bait carcasses (sheep, chickens, etc.) or in the soil, corn, seeds or other substrates.

1. USDOT allows you to fill the tube completely with dilute sample.
2. Tightly secure the screw cap.
3. If possible, always collect three tubes from the same source.
4. Label the three tubes as one item on the evidence submittal form.

For both pure and dilute 15 ml sample tubes, place all three tubes into the padded envelope and place the envelope into the larger round plastic container.

Place the plastic container into the two zip-lock bags, voiding all excess air and completely seal-locking each bag individually.

Attach all seizure tags, etc., to the top flap of the outer sealed plastic bag, taking care not to staple through the air-tight portion of the bag and thus compromise the sealing process.

Place all of your tagged evidence packages into a sturdy, corrugated cardboard shipping box.

Place the completed Evidence Submittal Form and Chain of Custody into an envelope and insert it into the cardboard shipping box.

Tape all openings of the box closed. Affix the shipping label and properly completed <u>DOT *Excepted Quantities*</u> label to box *(Red Circle E label). The shipping classification must be written on the label as well as the sub-class if the item has one.*

Note: If you are shipping hazardous samples with non-hazardous items in the same container, you must still place the hazardous evidence into sturdy, corrugated cardboard box first, and then place this box into another shipping container with the other evidence. The *DOT Excepted Quantities* label is then placed on the outermost container.

Package Weight Limit: If the complete evidence shipment with enclosed box containing the hazardous samples weighs more than 64 pounds, then you must ship the hazardous samples separately. (A shipping box that has a *DOT Excepted Quantities* label cannot weigh more than 64 pounds).

Ship via commercial carrier authorized by DOT to ship hazardous materials. Suspected pesticides cannot be shipped by US Postal Service.

15. Latent Print Evidence

To process items of evidence for latent prints, the evidence must be handled, preserved, packaged and shipped in a proper manner so that processing for 'friction ridge' evidence is possible. Failure to do so is likely to destroy any latent prints on the evidence items.

Always use gloves to pick up any type, porous or non-porous, friction ridge evidence items. Try to handle areas on the item not likely to have friction ridge deposits while being careful not to wipe or brush against the evidence item surfaces which are going to be processed.

General packaging and shipping instructions:

- Fasten the evidence items to a rigid surface or suspend the item inside a box with wire, zip-ties, or string to prevent shifting and contact with surfaces that will damage or eliminate friction ridge deposits. Note: friction ridge deposits are sensitive and they require appropriate steps to be taken to insure usefulness. Place documents and other paper-evidence (porous evidence surfaces) in large sealed manila envelopes. **Do not** write on the envelope with evidence inside as this may damage the evidence item(s).
- Place any developed friction ridge tape lifts in sealed manila or mailing envelopes previously labeled with a ball point pen (do not use a felt pen). **Do not** write on the envelope with evidence inside as this may damage the evidence item(s).
- Keep all items separate from each other to minimize destruction or contamination of friction ridge detail.
- Place all separately packaged items into another inner shipping container labeled with the words "Latent Print Evidence."

Things to avoid while collecting, handling, packaging and shipping evidence items suspected of bearing friction ridge detail:

- DO NOT cover items to be examined for friction ridge detail with evidence tape or other material.
- DO NOT handle friction ridge detail evidence without clean plastic, latex, or cotton gloves.
- DO NOT package items suspected of having friction ridge detail evidence in cotton, cloth, Styrofoam peanuts, or any other packaging that might smudge, scuff, or wipe away the friction ridge detail.

If you have ANY questions before, during, or after dealing with possible friction ridge evidence, PLEASE feel free to contact the Latent Print Examiner
541-482-4191

16. Digital Imagery

Digital Imagery evidence includes images on cameras, CD's, DVD's, SD cards, thumb drives, or other digital media or equipment which needs to be handled and packaged in a way to protect it from damage and alteration. The following guidelines should be followed when storing or packaging digital imagery evidence.

General Guidelines:

- Store the evidence in a cool dry area
- Keep the evidence away from magnets and devices that emit magnetic fields, as these can alter data.
- When re-packaging any evidence, retain all materials and seals for court.
- When dealing with devices impacted by moisture and static buildup avoid plastic bags. Antistatic bags, paper bags, and cardboard boxes are the preferred sealing containers for this type of evidence.

Regarding Media Cards/Thumb Drives:

- A paper envelope work well for these devices. Antistatic bag with desiccant can also be used.

Regarding CDs/DVDs:

- Place in sleeves to protect the recorded surface and pad them to prevent breakage.
- A 6" x 6" piece of heavy cardboard or foam board may be used.
- Rigid CD cases and cardboard sleeves can also be used.

Regarding Digital Cameras:

- Provide adequate padding to protect these devices during shipping.
- At least 2" of bubble wrap on all sides should be provided.
- Fit snuggly into shipping box.

Regarding Lithium Batteries in Camera Equipment:

- Leave them in the device to ship easier. Batteries that have been removed from these devices require special USDOT packaging.