

**Utah Department of Health**

**Utah Public Health Laboratories**

**RABIES**

**COLLECTION, PACKAGING, AND SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS**

1. Rabies Specimen Submission Instructions
2. Rabies QUICK Packaging Guide
3. Federal Shipping Regulations
4. UPHL Rabies Testing Policy and Fee Schedule
5. UPHL Rabies Test Request Form





- **Do not:**
  - Fix specimen in formalin or other preservative
  - Euthanize animal by clubbing or shooting in the head
- **Do not submit:**
  - Live animals;
  - Animals raised/confined to cage (hamsters, gerbils, mice, rats, rabbits, etc.);
  - Wild or domestic birds (including chickens), turtles, or other reptiles;
  - Animals without evidence of human exposure risk, such as wild rodents/mammals (mice, rats, rabbit, coyote, etc.) that have ONLY potentially exposed other animals.

## **SPECIMEN SUBMISSION**

### **Submission Form:**

A Rabies Testing Request Form must be completed for **each specimen** submitted.

- Verify all information for accuracy before submission.
- Circumstances of exposures (e.g., bite, scratch, or direct skin contact with saliva or blood from wild animal or probable exposure to rabid animal) should be documented in the Exposure Information section of the Request Form.

**Shipping:** (Federal regulations for shipping rabies specimens apply and are appended as note 3.)

- Refrigerate all specimens before and during shipment.
- Frozen cold packs should be used to provide refrigeration during transport.
  - DO NOT USE DRY ICE – GEL ICE PACKS ONLY.
- Ship specimens within 24 hours of euthanasia.
- Do not ship specimens to arrive on a weekend or a holiday unless the courier can guarantee delivery.
  - The Utah Public Health Laboratory is closed on Sundays and all state and federal holidays.
- Preferred shipping methods include:
  - Commercial carriers (e.g., FedEx, UPS, or local courier services).
    - NOTE: Shipping fees are the responsibility of the sender.
  - Hand-delivery:
    - During regular working hours (Mon-Fri: 8:00am - 5:00pm), deliver to the UPHL Public Health Laboratory, Clinical Specimen Receiving, located on the Northwest side of the UPHL building (West submission window).





**Laboratory Reports:**

- Specimens received by 11:00 am Monday –Friday (minus holidays) are usually reported by 5:00 pm on the same day. Specimens received after 11:00 am are reported the next working day.
- Urgent requests for testing on weekends or holidays may be made in consultation with the UDOH Epidemiologist-On-Call at (888) EPI-UTAH (374-8824, 24/7/365 availability).
- Rabies results may be reported by telephone, fax and/or US Mail.

**Laboratory Contact:**

For questions concerning rabies testing, call Utah Public Health Laboratory at 801-965-2400 and ask to speak to or leave a message for the Rabies Virologist (8:00 am - 5:00 pm Monday through Friday).



## 2. RABIES QUICK PACKAGING GUIDE

1. Drain specimen of all fluids then place in clear plastic bag.  
If necessary, wrap specimen in newspaper or absorbent pad to prevent sharp edges from puncturing bag. If submitting multiple specimens, place in separate bags, and label each bag with an identifier that matches the Rabies Specimen Submission Form. Submit a separate form for each specimen.
2. Place absorbent padding in the bag with specimen then tightly seal bag using rubber band or tape. (The bag must be **leak-proof**—check that it is tightly sealed)
3. Place clear bag into a (orange/red) biohazard bag, or second clear bag, and seal this bag using rubber band or tape.
4. Place bag(s) inside an inner Styrofoam box.
5. Place frozen gel pack(s) on top of specimen bag.
6. Close the inner Styrofoam box and place the Styrofoam lid on top.
7. Complete the Rabies Specimen Submission Form, place in a clear Ziploc bag, and then place on top of the Styrofoam lid. Submit a separate form for each specimen.



- 8.** Seal the lid of the outer box with packing tape.
- 9.** Label with the address of the Utah Public Health Laboratory visible outside the box.
- 10.** Send to the Utah Public Health Laboratory. Your facility will need to arrange transport and pay transport costs.
- 11.** Place UN3373, Shipping Address and Emergency Contact labels on outside of outer box.
- 12.** Write name of emergency contact person and 24/7 contact number on the Emergency Contact label.



### 3. NOTE: Regulations for Shipping Rabies Specimens

- Per federal regulations, rabies specimens must be shipped as a "**UN 3373 Biological Substance, Category B**" (49 CFR 173.199). These materials are regulated by DOT and IATA regulations.
- It is a federal requirement that the shipper of a Biological Substance, Category B be familiar with 49 CFR 173.199; these regulations are available online at <http://hazmat.dot.gov/>.
- Shipping containers and labels meeting federal regulations for shipping rabies specimens are available to local health departments and veterinarians at no charge upon request. Similar containers are acceptable provided they comply with the 49 CFR 173.199 instructions for Biological Substance, Category B.
- The shipper is responsible for packaging specimens correctly and shipping them rapidly. Packages that are not correctly labeled may be returned to the sender by the commercial courier.
- People who package specimens for shipping are legally required to take a class in shipment of infectious substances; the class is available commercially or through Utah Public Health Laboratories Training Program. Training and guidance for packaging and shipping is available through CDC and ARUP web sites (<https://www.aruplab.com/training/handling-shipping>, <https://www.cdc.gov/labtraining/training-courses/packaging-shipping-division-6.2-materials.html>).

