

How to Mail Exempt Patient Specimens with the U. S. Postal Service

These instructions have been developed in accordance with the changes to the [U. S. Domestic Mail Manual](#), Section 601 Mailability Standards, as published November 1, 2006.

Exempt Human or Animal Specimens Definitions (Para 10.17.2)

Exempt human or animal specimen means a human or animal sample (including, but not limited to, secreta, excreta, blood and its components, tissue and tissue fluids, and body parts) transported for routine testing not related to the diagnosis of an infectious disease.

Typically, exempt human specimens are specimens for which there is a low probability that the sample is infectious, such as specimens for drug or alcohol testing; cholesterol testing; blood glucose level testing; prostate-specific antigens (PSA) testing; testing to monitor heart, kidney, or liver function; pregnancy testing; and testing for diagnosis of noninfectious diseases such as cancer biopsies.

Patient specimen means material that is collected directly from humans or animals and transported for purposes such as diagnosis and research. Patient specimens include excreta, secreta, blood and its components, tissue and tissue swabs, body parts, and specimens in transport media (such as transwabs, culture media, and blood culture bottles).

Exempt Human or Animal Specimens Packaging (Para 10.17.10)

Exempt human or animal specimens are not subject to regulation as hazardous materials but must be packaged when presented for mailing as follows:

- Exempt human and animal specimens are **mailable as First-Class Mail, Priority Mail, Express Mail, or Package Services mail.**
- Must be triple-packaged and leak proof (if liquid) or sift proof (if solid).
- The primary and secondary packaging must be enclosed in a rigid outer shipping container.
- A single primary receptacle must not contain more than 500 ml of a liquid specimen or 500 grams of a solid specimen.
- The secondary container must be marked with the international biohazard symbol



The label should be orange or red background with black print.

- The outer shipping container must be marked on the address side with the words "Exempt human specimen" or "Exempt animal specimen," as appropriate.
- The secondary container must be securely and snugly enclosed in a fiberboard box or container of equivalent strength that serves as the outer shipping container
- At least one surface of the outer packaging must have a minimum dimension of 3.9 inches x 3.9 inches (100 mm x 100 mm).