

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH
STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
305 SOUTH STREET, JAMAICA PLAIN, MA 02130**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SENDING SPECIMENS FOR RABIES TESTING

IMPORTANT: All animals must be euthanized prior to submission. The rabies test is provided at no charge as a public service; therefore, only animals that have potentially exposed a human or domestic animal should be submitted. **For most specimens, submit only the entire head.** Only bats or pre-approved small rodents may be submitted whole without removing the head. For large animals, or those undergoing other diagnostic procedures, submission of the cerebellum and a complete cross-section of the brainstem is permissible. **Failure to submit an acceptable specimen will result in an unsatisfactory specimen and no test result. Specimens must be properly packaged (as described below) to prevent leakage of contents and transported the same day or shipped overnight ONLY to maintain specimen quality.**

Materials:

- 2 ziplock or otherwise sealable, leak-proof plastic bags
- Absorbent material (pads, paper towels, etc.)
- 1-2 frozen cold pack(s). **Do not use wet ice.**
- 1 pair disposable gloves
- 1 permanent marker
- Self-sticking document pouches or envelope and tape
- Labels to identify specimens on bags and forms
- 1 mailing container (cardboard box or plastic foam)
- Cushioning material (newspaper, etc.)
- Biohazard label
- Rabies Lab shipping label (UN3373- Category B)
- Specimen Request for Rabies Testing, SS-RA-1-17

Form: State Laboratory Specimen Request for Rabies Testing, SS-RA-1-17. Fill out the form and make 1 additional copy.

Packaging:

1. If submitting more than one specimen, ensure that each specimen is individually double wrapped and packaged. Identify each wrapped specimen by marking a number on the outer plastic bag. Fill out specimen request forms for each individual specimen submitted. For multiple specimens, include a shipping manifest and mark the corresponding number from the specimen bag on the matching specimen form.
2. **Wear gloves to package specimen.** Wrap the head in an absorbent pad or paper towel(s) and place the specimen into a plastic bag. Seal the bag. Place a biohazard label on the outside of the bag. Tape (do not staple) the specimen request form to the outside of the bagged specimen. Do not include used gloves with the specimen.
3. Place the bagged specimen into a larger plastic bag with additional absorbent material (such as paper towels) to absorb any liquid.
4. Place a prefrozen cold pack into the bag. **DO NOT USE WET ICE.** Seal the bag.
5. Place the wrapped, double-bagged specimen inside a cardboard box or foam container with adequate cushioning material. Place a copy of the submission form(s) in a sealed plastic bag inside the box. Seal the box. Place original completed Specimen Submission Form(s) for Rabies Testing in a sealed envelope or document pouch and affix to the outside of the box.

Storage: Specimen(s) should be submitted as soon as possible. Keep specimen(s) refrigerated until transport. Specimen(s) **MUST** be transported the same day or shipped by overnight **ONLY**. Do not freeze specimen(s). Frozen specimen(s) will delay testing by at least 1 business day and increase the chance of an unsatisfactory testing result. If the specimen(s) is/are accidentally frozen, keep frozen during transport.

Shipping instructions: Package specimen(s) with sufficient cold packs to maintain 4°C during transport or overnight shipping. Specimen(s) may be transported via a commercial carrier (such as UPS, FedEx, DHL-Airborne Express, etc.), or private courier if properly packaged and labeled as described above. Complete the “return address” and “person responsible” sections of the shipping/mailling label provided with this instruction form. Place the label on the outside of the box or foam container and mail to:

Rabies Laboratory
William A. Hinton State Laboratory Institute
305 South St., Jamaica Plain, MA, 02130

Result Reporting: Specimens received by 12:00 pm Monday through Friday will be tested the same day. Requests for testing outside of normal business hours must be approved by the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800 and after-hours testing will only be done on an emergency basis. Results will be phoned to the submitter when testing is completed. **The submitter is responsible for contacting any individual who needs to be made aware of the rabies test results.** For rabies positive animals, anyone listed on the submission form as being exposed will also be contacted by the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization.

Questions: For testing and specimen transport questions contact the Rabies Laboratory at (617) 983-6385, Monday through Friday between 8am-5pm. Questions concerning human exposures and the need for testing and prophylaxis can be directed 24/7 to the Division of Epidemiology and Immunization at (617) 983-6800.

From:

Person Responsible

Name: _____

Phone: _____

ATTN: RABIES LABORATORY
MASS. DEPT. OF PUBLIC HEALTH
STATE PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORY
305 SOUTH STREET
JAMAICA PLAIN, MA 02130-3597



UN 3373

**BIOLOGICAL
SUBSTANCES,
CATEGORY B**

ML-RA-1-08

CUT SHIPPING LABEL ALONG DOTTED LINE.
WRAP LABEL AROUND OUTSIDE OF SPECIMEN
SHIPPING CONTAINER. SECURE LABEL TO
CONTAINER WITH TAPE.

COPY THIS LABEL AS NEEDED