

Shipment of specimens from suspected, probable or confirmed Ebola cases under the WHO Ebola Shipment Funds Project

May 2015

Introduction

In order to expedite the shipment of specimens from suspected, probable or confirmed Ebola cases from countries to WHO Collaborating Centres for Reference and Research on Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers and Arboviruses or selected Reference Laboratory for Viral Haemorrhagic Fevers, WHO has created a project with World Courier (WC) Switzerland to provide shipping services to Member States. Under this agreement the costs incurred by the courier company will be covered by WHO and not by the sending country or laboratory.

This document outlines the step-by-step procedures to be followed by National Authorities for the shipment of clinical specimens potentially infected with Ebola virus. Use existing national mechanisms for shipment of infectious substances to ensure implementation of the procedure.

Procedure

1. Complete the booking form and email to World Courier, Switzerland. Please copy the WHO country office, the WHO regional laboratory focal point and WHO HQ laboratory focal point.
2. The shipper (laboratory) will be contacted by the World Courier local agent to arrange collection of the shipment. All relevant packaging, labelling and paperwork required for shipments of Infectious Substance Category will be provided by the shipper.
3. The following completed paperwork will be required before the agent can accept the package for shipment:
 - a. Airway bill (AWB), provided by the World Courier agent.
 - b. IATA [‘Shipper’s Declaration for Dangerous Goods’](#) form¹ (completed by the laboratory).
For ‘Proper Shipping Name’ use:
 - ‘Infectious substances, affecting humans (Ebola virus)’ for shipments of positive specimens
 - ‘Infectious substance, affecting humans (suspected category A infectious substance)’ for shipments of suspected cases of Ebola
 - c. An export permit for the originating country as required.
 - d. An import permit for the recipient country (will be checked by WC before shipping).
 - e. Packing list/proforma invoice indicating the recipient’s address, number of packages, details of contents including weight and value. For international transport a minimal value is required even if the items are being provided free of charge.
4. When the shipment has been dispatched, please notify the WHO country office and copy the WHO regional laboratory focal point and WHO HQ laboratory focal point.
5. Shipments of inactivated samples will be handled on a case by case basis. Please contact the WHO HQ laboratory focal point for further instructions (epln@who.int).

¹ Available online at <https://www.iata.org/whatwedo/cargo/dgr/Documents/Shippers-Declaration-Column-Format-Fillable.pdf>

Important Notes

- Shipments will only be covered by WHO with strict adherence to the above procedure.
- Payment will be made directly to World Courier. WHO is not able to accept or reimburse costs or invoices from the sending country/laboratory.
- Each shipment can contain a maximum of 50ml of infectious substances. Please ensure that specimens are batched and packaged correctly and do not exceed the maximum limit allowed per shipment.
- The shipper (laboratory staff) must be trained to ensure proper packaging, labelling, markings and correctly filled documentation. Please contact the National Reference laboratories or the Department in charge of Laboratory in the Ministry of Health or National Influenza Centre in your country (if available) for availability of trained shippers.
- If Member States experience problems with airlines rejecting shipments, please notify the WHO country office and copy the WHO regional laboratory focal point and WHO HQ laboratory focal point.
- For more information on Dangerous Goods regulation please consult http://www.who.int/ihr/publications/who_hse_ihr_2012.12/en/

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