**Internal Transport of Biological/Clinical Samples To University Laboratories**

This document provides guidance for the transport of low hazard biological and clinical materials between local sites and is **NOT** applicable to the transport of highly infectious (category A) samples. For further information on biological sample categories please visit the following HSE document ([http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/biologagents.pdf](http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/biologagents.pdf)) and go to appendix 1.2 “Transport Of Infectious Substances”.

This document outlines the legal requirements for transporting samples and combines information taken from the UN P650 biological samples packaging instructions, HSE guidance and Health Protection Agency guidelines.

**Transport of Samples Within The Same Building/Facility**

The guidelines within this section are intended for use when internal transport of low hazard clinical and biological samples (category B) occurs within the same building complex. For example, samples from the RVI are transported to the Leech/Cookson buildings with no outside travel, where a member of staff travels with the samples.

Samples should be packaged as follows:

- **Primary Container**: Clinical/biological samples should be placed in watertight sealed container, for example a sealed Vacutainer™ or a 25ml Sterilin specimen Universal tube™ with screw lid fastened.

- **Outer Container**: The primary container is then placed in a rigid sealed/secured outer container e.g. a polystyrene box containing wet/dry ice. It is important that the lid is securely sealed into position in case of an accident or tripping. Where possible a medical transport bag should be strongly considered.

This outer container should contain the following signage

**Biological / Clinical Sample: Do not open Outside of the Laboratory**

**If Found Please contact (0191) 222xxx**

**Transport of samples from local sites in Newcastle**

The guidelines within this section are intended for use when internal transport of clinical and biological samples occurs between local sites that involves transport outside of the building or via public roads. For example, samples transported from the Centre for Life / Freeman Hospital to the Medical school, where a member of staff travels with the samples. If the sample is to be sent alone or be supervised by external companies (e.g. a courier) then full UN3373 packaging requirements and associated paperwork would be required as outlined on the USO website.
Samples should be packaged as follows:

- **Primary package**: Clinical/biological samples should be placed in sealed container, for example a sealed Vacutainer™ or a 25ml Sterilin specimen Universal tube™.

- **Secondary Package**: If the sample is liquid then the sealed primary container should be placed inside a sealed leak proof secondary package such as a sealed plastic bag or another watertight container which would be sufficient to contain all of the liquid contents if the primary container failed or was breached. This secondary container should also contain enough absorbent material to absorb the entire liquid contents of the sample. These need not be expensive one time sealable BioBags – simple plastic bags sealed with freezer bag clips can offer a water tight environment if performed correctly.

- **Tertiary Package**: The secondary package is then placed in a rigid sealed/secured outer container e.g. a cardboard box or plastic container, which contains relevant signs outlined below.

- **Frozen Samples**: For temperature sensitive samples the secondary container may also be a polystyrene box containing wet / dry ice (the box should be sealed with tape). The polystyrene box can be placed inside a rigid cardboard box (the tertiary package) for signs to be applied. NB polystyrene boxes and associated outer cardboard boxes can be reused from samples delivered from companies (eg frozen antibodies) and will comply with UN3373, simply re-label the outer box.

- **Medical transport Bags**: For transport of clinical samples from Hospitals to the University, a number of commercial companies now produce UN3373 approved medical bags that come in a variety of sizes typically costing £20-50. Where possible, use of such purpose designed bags should be encouraged, if custom containers are to be used these must meet UN3373 specifications.

**Signage**: The Tertiary outer box/packaging should bear the following signage.

![UN3373 Signage](image)

**Biological / Clinical Sample: Do not open Outside of the Laboratory**

**If Found Please contact (0191) 222xxx**

In the unlikely event of a traffic accident or the carrier falling ill en route to the University, this signage will identify a member of University staff who can be contacted for safe collection of the biological materials. Please note for external transport shipment via a courier this wording is **not to be used**, the correct wording for external transport is outlined in the USO website documentation.
**Medical Sample Bags**

The following types of medical bag have UN3373 labels, are rigid (meet drop test requirements), have sender/return document pouches, are sealable and maintain temperature for 6 hours.


UN 3373 approved medical bags are available from:

- [http://www.versapak.co.uk/product_detail/?products_id=231](http://www.versapak.co.uk/product_detail/?products_id=231)
- [http://www.sharpsafe.co.uk/p/90/Transport_Bags.html](http://www.sharpsafe.co.uk/p/90/Transport_Bags.html)
- [http://hygo.co.uk/store/waste_disposal.php](http://hygo.co.uk/store/waste_disposal.php)
Summary Of Packaging For Internal Clinical / Biological Sample Transport

1. **CLINICAL SAMPLE**
   - Liquid samples
   - Sealed Primary container
   - Frozen samples

2. Leak proof pack with absorbent material

3. UN3373 Medical Bag
   - UN3373 labelled outer box

- Biological / Clinical Sample: Do not open Outside of the Laboratory
- If Found Please contact (0191) 222xxx