

Shipping Infectious Substances to NPHL

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The Nebraska Public Health Laboratory (NPHL) will now provide two types of certified infectious substance (triple-pack) shipping containers. These shipping containers should be used by laboratories for the submission of specimens to the NPHL for banking purposes.

The first type of shipping container has been supplied by the NPHL to Nebraska laboratories since May 2003. These boxes should be used to submit infectious substance specimens to the NPHL on microbiologic agar slant tubes.

A second type of shipping container became available as of August 21, 2003 to submit infectious substance specimens to the NPHL on microbiologic agar plates. The option of the second box type was in response to laboratorians requests that boxes that would support plates were more useful than those that support slants.

Banked organisms include:

Campylobacter spp.

Escherichia coli O157:H7

Listeria monocytogenes

Salmonella spp.

Yersinia pestis

Shigella spp.

VISA/VRSA

Vibrio spp.

Francisella tularensis

Shiga-toxin positive

stool culture filtrate

Brucella spp.

Bacillus anthracis

From sterile body sites:

Haemophilus influenzae

Neisseria meningitidis

Streptococcus pneumoniae

This change is an effort to help comply with the new Department of Transportation, Hazardous Goods Regulations (DOT 49 CFR) that became effective February 14, 2003. Isolates submitted to the NPHL for banking purposes fall into the "infectious substances category", according to the regulations, and require special packaging by the submitting laboratory. Shipment containers will be available for transportation through the existing NPHL courier system. When these containers are submitted to the NPHL with a specimen for banking purposes, the containers will be decontaminated (if necessary) and re-circulated back to the submitting facility for reuse. Infectious substances, or "highly suspect diagnostic specimens" submitted to the NPHL for purposes other than banking, can be sent using the same infectious substance container.

To request shipping containers, please access the "Supply Order" link at www.nphl.org, or call NPHL Client Services at 1-800-334-0459 or 403-559-2440. For questions, please contact Josh Rowland at 402-559-6070 or by e-mail at jrowland@unmc.edu.